Welcome to the Reagan Era

The Editors • John Osborne • Ronald Steel

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

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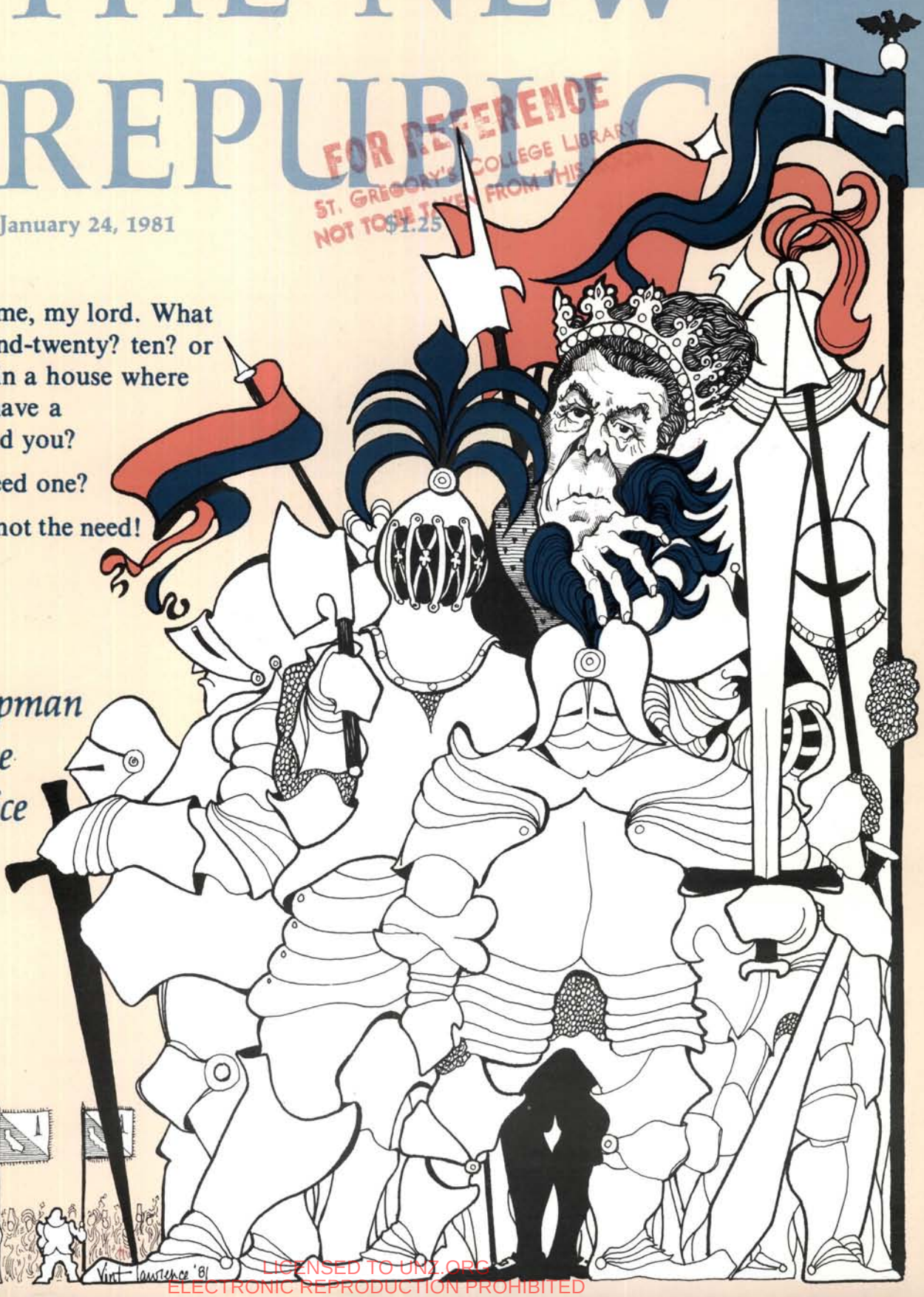
January 24, 1981 $1.25

G(r me, my lord. What
nee- you five-and-twenty? ten? or
five? To follow in a house where
twice so many have a
command to tend you?

REGAN. What need one?

LEAR. O reason not the need!

Stephen Chapman on the Secret Service



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TRB

from Washington
January 24, 1981

The American Paradox

After 50 years in Washington, I think the thing that startles me most is the continuance of a political system that can't work, which nevertheless works pretty well. I watch Ronald Reagan's inaugural here and reflect on the great American paradox. I'm not the first to say this. "The theme of a generation of writers on American public affairs has been the unworkability of the machinery of government," wrote Professor Schattschneider in *The Semi-Sovereign People* (1960). He continued that it would be difficult to find anywhere in the world a wider gap than that between the "pessimistic and defeatist" political scientists, on the one hand, "and the performance of the regime on the other."

Instead of lessening since then, the hazards seem to me to be increasing. And now, with the jolly Reagan inaugural, we begin a new political cycle. We hold our breath and hope for the best. Reagan gets the customary honeymoon and the 100 days. Then will his momentum begin to give out? All he has to do is solve the unsolvable. Four years ago Jimmy Carter was the man to do it. In clearing out my files—that helps give me perspective—I ran across a couple of Carter speeches. In his first economic message to Congress, January 31, 1977, Carter said that "the economy I found when I took office had 7.5 million Americans out of work" besides millions more under-employed or dropouts. He was going to start remedying this by various means, including an $11.4 billion tax rebate, but remained "committed to a balanced Federal budget for the fiscal year 1981." In a "fireside chat" to the nation two days later, he said, "I took office a couple of weeks ago in the middle of the worst economic slowdown in the last 40 years." Now it is Reagan's turn to boast about how bad the situation is. As to Carter—he noted in passing that "the United States is the only major industrial country without a comprehensive, long-range energy policy." Of course he would fix that. He bombarded Congress with energy proposals, but the Democratic legislature brushed them aside. I am sure Reagan will have his own electrifying messages and I shall preserve them, too. Maybe Congress will listen to him. But the founding fathers interposed a difficulty 200 years ago when they separated the executive from the legislature. Let the two powers fight it out. Today the problems are more subtle and complex. Did Elbridge Gerry ever hear of macroeconomics? What did Gouverneur Morris know about the prime rate? We are huddled together today in big cities and everything affects everything else. Other countries don't have this problem of separated powers. Every recent president has yearned for cabinet government—collegial policy decisions—but the pattern doesn't fit. The American effort to solve complicated problems is like a long-distance runner with a weight tied to his leg.

Let us see what Reagan can do. Maybe he can tax-cut us all to prosperity. In the meantime there is a deep lack of confidence in government. A poll shows only 12 percent think government is doing a good job. In elections only about half the potential voters bother to vote. They feel something is wrong but don't know what. They execrate "bureaucrats." They elect outsiders who will come to Washington and clean things up. Voters assume it is a matter of personalities; they rarely see the institutional difficulties in the problem. One wonders how long patience will last.

Washington is not a place for quick action. On energy, for example, Nixon, Ford, and Carter all sought speed from Congress—in vain. On finances, the legislature, alone among democracies, can boost the executive budget while the president has only an inadequate veto. On a small matter like handgun control a single entrenched interest group, the National Rifle Association, can thwart the will of the public in Congress as represented by repeated opinion polls. On a big matter like foreign affairs, a minority of 34 senators in a Congress of 535 members can constitutionally veto a treaty like SALT II. (As to SALT, America's ambassador to the Soviets, Thomas J. Watson Jr., onetime chief executive of IBM, leaves Moscow saying that the Senate's failure to act is a "tragedy—perhaps a disaster.")

All the time the pressure on America for quick, coherent government steadily grows. At home President Reagan must decide where to trim a proposed two percent from welfare and cut the public sector if he is to finance his program of tax reduction and higher defense. Abroad there is Russia, a restless alliance, and an ever more menacing storm of overpopulation and diminishing resources. President Reagan's talents seem to this reporter to be those of the agreeable nine to five board chairman, though I may misperceive him. Walter Lippmann gave advice to Warren Harding which might be appropriate now: "For if Mr. Harding is to be somebody, and not merely the junction point where all the political collisions occur, he will have to become a real person by the only method open to a man of his intellectual habits. He cannot go into solitude and find the truth. He cannot study a pile of papers and arrive at a policy. He must converse with somebody he trusts—that is the way of his life. And that is a good way if he knows whom to trust, but the worst way possible if he does not."

We all studied General Alexander Haig this past week in his confirmation hearing, wondering what role he might play in the number two seat next to the chairman in the drama of the White House boardroom. He is a formidable, dominant figure, a virtuoso of power, with what he describes as a "passionate belief" in the presidency, which I take to mean a mystic, semi-religious view of the chief executive which separates the sovereign, say, from the prime minister. His high cheekbones, triangular face, and little grin sometimes suggest the faun. He was just short of arrogant to hostile questioners and established a kind of dominance over milder senators. I suspect he still has presidential ambitions. After all, he knows power. When Richard Nixon, president number 37, began to slip, Haig was number 37½.

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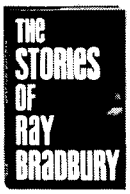

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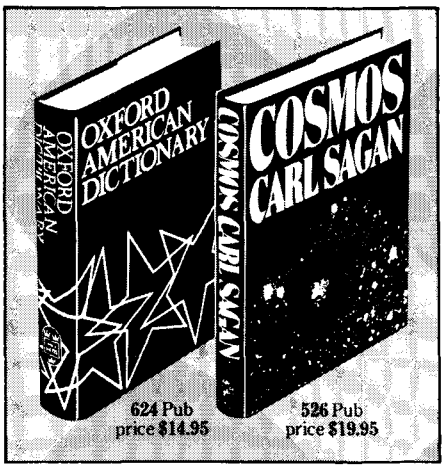

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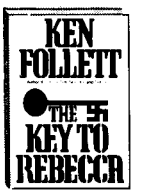

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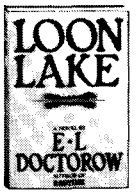

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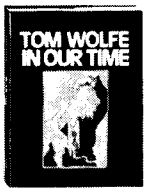

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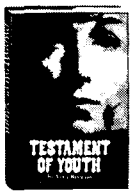

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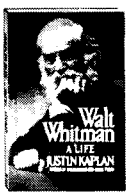

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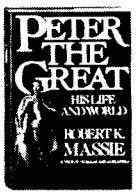

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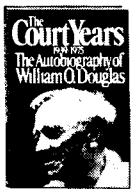

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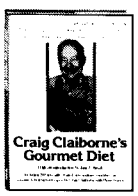

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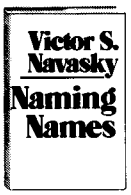

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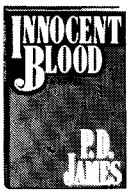

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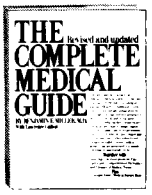

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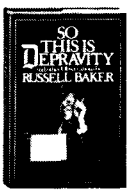

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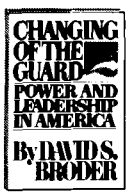

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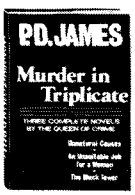

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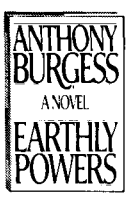

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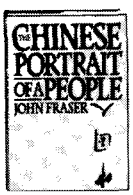

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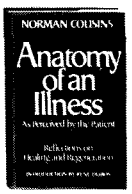

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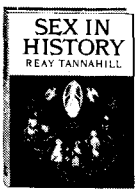

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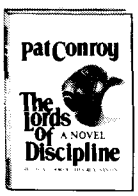

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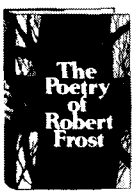

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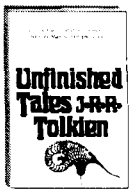

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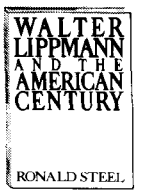

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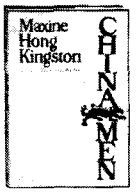

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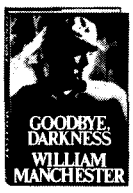

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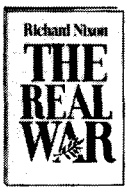

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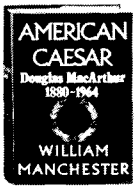

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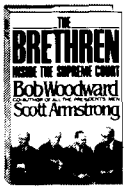

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

January 24, 1981

Welcome to Hard-Line Times

Alexander Haig didn't exactly cover himself with glory at his confirmation hearings last week, but neither did the senators who questioned him. Of course it is their job to grill prospective presidential appointees, and to be skeptical, even unflinching, in their grilling. This is the way our system compensates for the fact that the men and women summoned to serve in the cabinet are ordinarily unknown both to Congress and to the people. The process is not required in parliamentary systems because the individuals who sit on the government bench are always known public figures, and particularly well known to their colleagues both in the majority party and in the opposition. But Alexander Haig *was* well known to those before whom he appeared. This did not mean, of course, that they should have made his appearance perfunctory, much less that they should have dispensed with it entirely.

Nevertheless, what some members of the Foreign Relations Committee did do unnecessarily was to try to turn the confirmation hearings into a reenactment of the Watergate morality play. Their purpose was not, surely, to elicit new information at this late date. Rather, they wanted to elicit a ritual recantation from Haig about his views on, and his behavior in, those darkest days of the Nixon era. Indeed, it was quite clear from the beginning of the hearings—despite the studied effort to create a sense of mystery about the outcome—that Haig's confirmation was assumed. After all, these same senators had never complained to President Carter that Haig was too tainted and dishonorable to serve in Europe as the chief, with many diplomatic responsibilities, of the most important military command in the Western defense.

Last week's episode of Watergate revisited was not an edifying spectacle. Haig's reluctance to allow the word "immoral" to pass his lips was a disturbing indication of the limits of the military mind, as if "stupid" and "illegal" were the worst that could be said about shocking criminal deeds. It didn't help much that Haig finally coughed up the word "immoral" in a statement probably force-fed by his lawyer, Joseph Califano. But, given the peculiar sense of loyalty that kept him serving Nixon to the bitter end, there was some dignity in his refusal to take what might seem the easy way out and come up with some formulaic condemnation of his old boss. And there was dignity, and justice too, in his refusal to distance himself from his other old boss, Henry Kissinger.

For the senators, memories of Watergate must have evoked their long-gone days at the center. They yearned for the days when fury was virtue. There was much sham outrage, a standard senatorial reflex by now; huffing and puffing from Lowell Weicker; much the same from a much better senator, Paul Sarbanes. The public, one senses, was on Haig's side; how could it not have been, seeing how deftly he shrugged off

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Claiborne Pell's bumbling hauteur, Larry Pressler's pretentiousness? The undercurrent throughout was Watergate, with only a few diversions to the more weighty American enormity in Indochina. The Democratic fixation on Watergate is understandable; it is still and rightly a Republican embarrassment. But the real subject of the hearings was, or should have been, the conduct of foreign policy. After Jimmy Carter, however, that is a Democratic embarrassment.

When Haig was allowed to expound his views on foreign policy issues, he was intelligent, coherent, and moderate. Haig made clear that he was not bound by the fantasies of the Republican platform (a blow to the far right), nor even, he suggested, by the oratorical flights of Ronald Reagan during the many years he campaigned for the presidency on the God-country-family circuit (a bigger blow to that same constituency). We do not agree with everything that Haig told the senators, not by a long shot. He was not (as we've written twice) our first choice for secretary of state. But we agree with enough of what he said at the Senate hearings actually to be pleased, finally, with his assumption of the post. The country now also has a better sense of why the Haig appointment was so gratifyingly received in London, Paris, Bonn, Tokyo, Jerusalem, and Cairo. Let the Russians take notice and the third world, too: from now on, not every provocation will be accommodated by the US. Nor is this bluster. Haig has a sound sense of the internal weaknesses that afflict the Soviet Union. He also knows why these weaknesses tempt the Soviets toward an aggressive foreign policy.

The foreign policy apparatus now taking shape is not one we would have designed ourselves. But, then, Ronald Reagan wasn't our choice for president either. Given this constraint, though, it's hard to imagine better selections and very easy to imagine worse. Brains are not everything, but they do count for something. The emerging diplomatic team is long on historical learning, also long on analytic skills, and short on the goofy high-mindedness that characterized so many in Cyrus Vance's State Department.

Reagan's most controversial foreign policy appointment is that of Jeane Kirkpatrick as ambassador to the United Nations. Maybe that's because it's so prominent a post. Kirkpatrick has drawn fire primarily for the distinction she has made between human rights violations by hostile totalitarian regimes and violations by authoritarians who are more congenial to the United States. This can be a mischievous distinction if it is used to justify support for systematically repressive governments. But it is not a distinction without meaning or without valid implication for tactics and strategy. Furthermore, Kirkpatrick's record demonstrates that she is anything but callous about human rights. Her commitments go back at least a generation to an association with Hubert Humphrey in the Democratic party struggles over civil rights. She emerged more recently as a national figure by mobilizing public opinion against the Ford administration's early obsequious version of detente, which led our government to avert its eyes from the heroic witness and the presence here of Alexander Solzhenitsyn. Kirkpatrick has slated Carl Gershman, a brilliantly provocative social democrat, as her deputy. After the Andrew Young-Donald McHenry interregnum, our UN delegation will no longer be squeamish about defending democratic values.

As of this writing, the State Department appointments at the subcabinet level are, to a man (no other women as yet), impressive and serious individuals. Richard Burt, assistant secretary for politico-military affairs, who gets bashed elsewhere in this issue, is not a reckless sabre-rattler; he understands the use of power and also its limits. Elliot Abrams, slated to be assistant secretary for international organizations, does not shrink from the challenge of ideological warfare. With him as liaison to the delegation on the East River, there won't be one policy enunciated in New York, another in Washington, and maybe still another actually put into effect. Chester Crocker, Meyer Rashish, and Paul Wolfowitz are widely respected, even by people who do not share their views.

The slate at State is a bipartisan one. If some of the Democrats appointed by Reagan had worked in the outgoing administration, Jimmy Carter's foreign policy might possibly not be remembered primarily for its fecklessness. The new group is very much influenced, and for the good, by Daniel Patrick Moynihan; one departing and despairing Carterite complained that it represents triumph of "the *Commentary* crowd." It is. We do not see that as a term of abuse, which is the way it was meant, or as an occasion for despair. We have our differences with *Commentary*, big ones and heatedly aired, in public and in private. But whatever our differences, no one can deny the contributions of *Commentary* and its writers, some now tapped for high office, to a revitalized definition of American foreign policy as the vocation of freedom. In these appointments we also must recognize a respect for ideas on politics that has been sorely missing these last four years.

(continued on page 8)

Coming Next Week:

Theodore Draper on Kissinger Out of Power.

•

Simon Leys on Chinese Characters.

•

John Clive on Isaiah Berlin.

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Correspondence

Raving in response

To the editors:

It would be impossible, not to mention stupid, to disagree with the cause of peace in the Middle East. I suspect that you do your own cause a disservice, however, when you react in such strident tones to the ignorant gibberish that is spouted willy-nilly every day in not just the United Nations but probably in every legislative body in existence ("UN Protocols," *TNR*, December 27, 1980).

If the truth were known, you likely did more to legitimize the honorable Jordanian delegate's ravings by raving so yourselves than if you had ignored the incident as the rest of the news media apparently did.

But most important, your comparison of Jordan's Hazem Nuseibeh to the likes of a Goebbels or Streicher would insult the intelligence of your readers were it not such a naive assessment: even those worthy miscreants needed a Hitler to validate their power. The "anti-Semites" you decry so hysterically seem interested mainly in fighting among themselves between their own hysterical pronouncements. They certainly don't deserve even the odious respectability of comparisons with truly powerful—and equally corrupt—men.

Your final reference in this orgy of rhetoric to the UN as a "factory of lies on the East River" sounds more like it came out of the Iranian Majlis than your usual studiousness. It deserves to be treated about as seriously.

Erik C. Strom
Fresno, California

'Bravo!'

To the editors:

I would like to say "bravo!" to you for your editorial on Soviet intentions in Poland ("Who is Afraid?," *TNR*, December 20, 1980). I particularly liked your remark about the bankruptcy of the formerly popular opinion that because the members of the Politburo are old bureaucrats, they therefore are too cautious to risk upsetting the status quo in international affairs. You are depressingly accurate in pointing out the spinelessness of the West's response to Soviet aggression, from Reagan's unwillingness to support the grain boycott to Krupp's rush to sell advanced technology to East Germany. Someday we will realize the danger of what we are doing, but I only hope it won't be too late.

Tom Fallows
Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Jerusalem's history

To the editors:

Marie Syrkin's "Jerusalem Belongs to Israel" (*TNR*, December 13, 1980) makes a curious and perhaps significant error. She states "And no other people, while ruling Jerusalem, chose the city for its capital." As its name suggests, the Kingdom of Jerusalem chose the city for its capital for as long as militarily possible, from 1099-1187 and again 1229-1244.

In the long history of the city, a century or so of Crusader rule might not be considered to count for much. It is, however, substantially longer than the existence to date of the state of Israel. There are some other similarities worth mentioning. The Kingdom of Jerusalem was established by former residents of European states united by a common religion. It existed precariously, surrounded by much more numerous and generally hostile Moslem Arabs. The crucial factors in its survival were superior military technology, a flow of aid from overseas, and the divisions of its enemies. These enabled it to win victory after victory in the short run, but its strategic position was so precarious that it faced extinction after a single major defeat.

Martynas A. Yčas
Alexandria, Virginia

Marie Syrkin replies:

The Crusaders were not a "people" in the accepted sense. This conglomerate of "soldiers of Christ," who came from various countries at papal urging to liberate the Holy Sepulchre—many planned to return home once their mission was accomplished—was never united by a common national purpose.

Though Arab commentators are fond of comparing the Crusader adventure and Zionist settlement, the differences are far more significant than any similarities. The Crusaders were military invaders who ruthlessly massacred Moslems and Jews in their conquest. Jewish pioneers peacefully built agricultural communes (on wasteland purchased from Arab owners at handsome prices) with the dream of reviving Jewish nationhood in their historic homeland through productive labor. When the small Jewish state was proclaimed by international consensus, it could hardly boast of "superior military technology." Martynas Yčas finds the Crusader experience relevant to the current Middle East. What does the implied threat, that millions of hostile Arabs supplied with superior military technology by foreign powers may succeed in destroying Israel, prove? I discussed Israel's moral and historic claim, not the danger always posed by aggression. Obviously, a combine of Israel's enemies, unfailingly armed by the Soviet bloc, makes Israel's situation "precarious." The fate of any small country in the contemporary world is precarious unless a principled international order comes into being.

Double, double

To the editors:

The TRB column in the December 13, 1980, issue is in error in stating "A country doubles population every 20 years if its rate of increase is 2.5 percent." Correct answer: 28.8 years. Any annual rate of increase divided into 72 gives the number of years necessary to double.

Elmer L. Andersen
Roseville, Minnesota

Unfair to Ouagadougou

To the editors:

I must take issue with part of the closing statement of "UN Protocols." As a Peace Corps volunteer in Upper Volta I had numerous occasions to visit its capital, Ouagadougou, which you characterized as an appropriate site for a "factory of lies," and, sarcastically, as "cheerful." Granted, few third world cities appear orderly and gay to the casual Western observer passing through. However, having had three years to get to know the people and to explore beneath the impoverished veneer of Ouagadougou, I found a wealth of happiness and morality totally lacking in the great majority of the cities of the so-called "developed" world. In short, your allusion seems most inappropriate, bordering on slander.

Tom Bands
Dundalk, Maryland

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Now, there are good ideas and bad ideas. For example, we know from their writings that we will not get from this group a cuddly, credulous, and sentimental view of China—one that assumes it to be a worthy and trustworthy ally to be armed against the Russians. The ideology of freedom will be a constraint on the right-wing enthusiasm for an anti-Soviet alliance. On other matters, though, the Reagan group's ideas make us more apprehensive than reassured. For example, the Reagan campaign revealed an instinct to push on with nuclear weapons as the cornerstone of defense strategy.

It's also likely that the Reagan administration will bind itself to the disintegrating government of El Salvador, with tragic consequences not only for what's left of a democratic center in that country but also for our relations with Mexico. The right US policy for El Salvador is not easy to see. The rebels of the left are fast falling under the control of Castroite and pro-Russian elements, no harbinger of a democratic future. But the government also is besieged by rebels of the right. It is the government's land reform, after all, that provoked the slaughter from armed reactionaries. A complicated situation. But surely the wrong solution is the one the Carter administration chose. Last month it cut off military aid. Then, in the week before it left town, it restored that aid. Why? Because the government had gotten too weak and the left had become too strong. And why did that happen? Precisely because of the earlier cut-off. Things couldn't be worse. Welcome to Washington, Mr. Reagan.

White House Watch

Without Joy

President-elect Ronald Reagan said in Los Angeles, the day before he flew to Washington for his inauguration and the work and celebrations preceding it, that the mounted police (presumably those of the US Park Service) had invited him to ride their horses in their horse park when he is so inclined. He added with satisfaction that this assures an adequate escort when he goes riding, which he and Nancy Reagan like to do.

This was the nearest thing to a joyous remark that Reagan emitted early in the pre-inaugural week. Jimmy Carter didn't come that close. It was, on the whole, a singularly joyless time. Only a committed Reagan enthusiast could be altogether happy with his pack of rather ordinary cabinet nominees. No reasonable person could be at all happy when the strongest individual in the lot, General Alexander Haig, was constrained to say at his Senate confirmation hearing that "it is not for me, *it is not in me*, to render moral judgment" upon his former patrons and masters, Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger. Citizens who, like this observer, had preferred Carter to Reagan could only wish that Carter had made it easier than he had during his four years to regret his departure. And they could only wish that Carter could have come as near as he seemed to have come to arranging the release of the American hostages in Iran without promising to pay off their captors. What excitement, what show of joy there was arose mostly from the pumped-up, commercialized extravaganzas arranged by, among others, that soiled pal of undiscriminating dignitaries and goons, Frank Sinatra. It was reported that a celebrant would have to spend upward of $2,000 in order to participate fully in the festivities, and could spend $5,000 or more on dance and dinner tickets, memorial license plates, and other souvenirs. The sponsors appealed for individual and foundation gifts to help meet the costs.

More slowly and scratchily than might have been expected from exponents of thrift and efficiency in government, Reagan's people proceeded with the preliminary chores of transition. Reagan himself took part to an extent that his spokesmen said was greater than outsiders perceived it to be. After his first and, at this writing, his only meeting with all of his cabinet appointees, some of his remarks were reported to the media and the world by James S. Brady, a jolly publicist who, after prolonged delay and a ballyhooed search, demeaning to Brady, for somebody else, had been appointed Reagan's White House press secretary. Brady speaking: "He said when we meet as a cabinet we will be successful if we have the thinking of all people. He asked them . . . to speak up on anything. He said the only no-no was going to be for anyone . . . during the discussion to mention the political ramifications of something. He said, 'We want to operate as if there's no next election.'. . . The decision should be based on what's good for the nation, not what's politically beneficial." Only through "free open discussion," Brady said Reagan said, "will I find out what I need to know to make the decisions." Brady said Reagan then "emphasized that it would be the President making the decision."

Reporter: "When he says that the cabinet can speak, does that mean that they can speak openly in public on their views?"

Brady: "Of course."

Reporter: "Whether they conform with Reagan's or not?"

Brady: "Yes."

The foregoing is quoted at length because it is such utter nonsense. Government is politics, politics is government. Reagan surely meant, though Brady didn't quote him saying, that free expression among his people at cabinet and lower levels must stop once a decision is made. In practical fact, as former governor Reagan must know as well as anybody, public dissent

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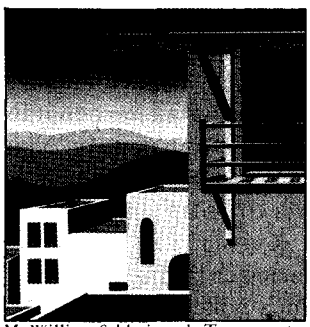

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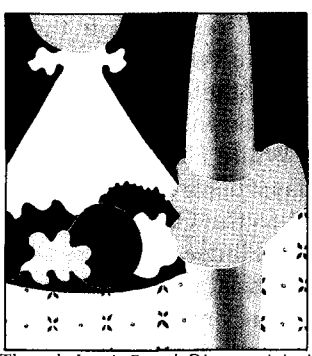

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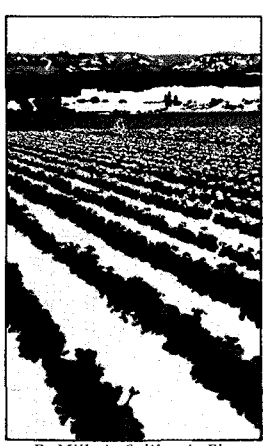

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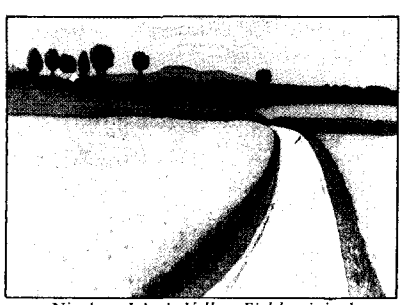

Nicolette Jelen's *Yellow Field*, original etching. Signed edition of 195.

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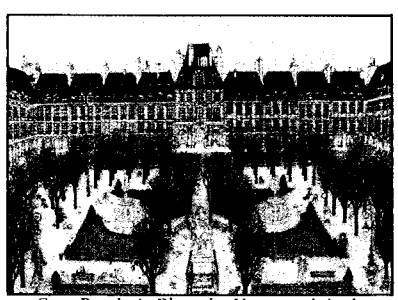

Cuca Romley's *Place des Vosges*, original hand-colored etching. Signed edition of 150.

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among a president's advisers or among subordinates who'd like to be known as advisers can lock in a President and frustrate or prevent decisions that he intends to make. The planned White House staff is to include a director of communications, modeled after the first one under Richard Nixon, who is to oversee department and agency press spokesmen. Reagan's designated chief of staff, James A. Baker III, will supervise the communications director. Baker explained the need for one in an interview on January 5: "You can't have 14 or 15 [cabinet] officers going off in different directions. So we hope to coordinate—not to muzzle people, not to stifle them—but to make sure that we have a coordinated national story."

Baker, transition director Edwin Meese III, and Reagan's chief talent-hunter, E. Pendleton James, have been saying and emphasizing since November that total compatibility with and loyalty to Reagan and Reagan's views are absolute requirements for Reagan appointees. Describing the process for finding and choosing the senior subordinates of cabinet department heads, Pendleton James said on January 5 that the system is so designed that "each presidential appointee fully realizes that he has been appointed by the President of the United States and not by the secretary." Reagan's chosen secretary of defense, Caspar Weinberger, had to go personally to the mat with Reagan to secure appointment of Frank Carlucci, an experienced diplomat and federal official, as the deputy defense secretary. Reagan's conservative true believers considered that Carlucci's long record in the US Foreign Service and in the Nixon, Ford, and Carter administrations stamped him a dangerous radical. They preferred a California hard-liner, William Van Cleave, for the job.

Sins of Commission

Commission Backs National ID Plan

—*Los Angeles Times*, January 7, 1981

Worker I.D. Card Proposal Rejected

—*San Francisco Chronicle*, January 7, 1981

(Thanks to Joseph T. Edmiston, Venice, California.)

Was Carlucci's appointment a retreat from the past insistence on total adherence to Reagan's views? The answer turns on what's meant by Reagan's views—the ones he trumpeted before he was elected, or the moderated version of them that he's promoted since November 4? In an ABC television interview January 11, James Baker cited the Carlucci appointment as evidence that Reagan's cabinet secretaries *can* have the subordinates they want, sometimes. They can, one gathers, if Reagan and his head-hunters come around to wanting the same appointees. Compatibility and loyalty, it becomes evident as the process of subcabinet choice winds on, are varying quantities subject to changing judgments. Let it be noted here that Reagan, James, and James's chief transition deputy, Nixon and Ford veteran James Cavanaugh, are right in judging subcabinet appointments to be immensely important to any administration. It is at that level and in the senior career bureaucracies that the power to implement or bury a President's policies finally lies.

THERE IS only one place where an effective watch can be kept for any President on the federal beast, and that place is in the White House. For all his talk of a free-speaking cabinet and of government without presidential staff domination, Reagan and his principal transition and White House choices seem to understand this. Six days before the inauguration, however, they appeared to the Carter incumbents to be building up their White House structure very casually. Reagan's designated assistant for national security affairs, Richard V. Allen, and retired rear admiral James W. Nance had interviewed some though far from all members of the National Security Council staff, and Nance had told the ones he saw that they were expected to be gone by January 20. The NSC joke was that they told him, "You can't fire us because we're leaving anyway." Some of them doubted that Allen would have more than the beginnings of a staff in place by inauguration day. One of the staff's many career detailees from other agencies had been asked to stay; others with a fund of accumulated expertise had been invited out. Much the same seemed true of Reagan dealings with the other core organization at the White House, the Domestic Policy Staff. All of its professionals expected to leave and, as far as was known, none had been asked to stay. Throughout the White House and the associated Executive Office, the Reagan transition people seemed interested in retaining only enough clerical employees, secretaries particularly, to keep the machine turning, along with the sizable crew of ushers, messengers, travel arrangers, communications specialists, and other "support" personnel who serve President after President.

I conclude the Carter cycle of the White House Watch with two notes. Washington attorney John O. Marsh Jr., a member of Reagan's transition advisory committee, was wrongly identified here recently as a former Virginia Republican congressman. He's a for-

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mer Democratic congressman who now considers himself an independent. And I note objection to the pointless, sophomoric piece about the retiring White House physician, Rear Admiral William Lukash, in our January 17 issue. He has served his presidents and the country well.

John Osborne

We really can get more bang for the buck.

Defense Without Mirrors

Now it is all but admitted by the Reaganites that John Anderson had it right all along: the only way you can cut taxes, increase defense spending, and balance the budget all at the same time is with mirrors. Facing a federal deficit of $60 billion and justifiably fearful of triggering hyper-inflation, the Reagan people apparently are going to postpone their tax cut, try to find ways to trim domestic spending, and make budget-balancing a goal for the future. It's still unclear what they will do about the defense budget, but it seems impossible that they can fulfill the expenditure promises they made (or, rather, seemed to make) during the campaign without exploding the budget and, possibly, the economy with it.

The Carter administration has proposed spending $171 billion on defense for the current fiscal year and $194.6 billion for 1982, for a real increase (figuring inflation at 10 percent) of 4.6 percent. Ronald Reagan never committed himself to any specific dollar or percent figure, but his campaign aides and other supporters seldom mentioned increases of less than six percent. Most of them talked of much larger numbers. The Republican party platform said that the Soviet Union was spending "over $50 billion" more on defense annually than the United States, "achieving superiority as a result," and pledged that Republicans would institute "a sustained defense expenditure sufficient to close the gap." Paul Nitze of the Committee on the Present Danger said in a panel discussion last June that he thought the budget should be hiked $20 billion above Carter levels next year and $40 billion to $50 billion per year thereafter. The Heritage Foundation's defense panel called for a minimum increase of $35 billion per year over Carter levels, but indicated that the country really needed $75 billion or $160 billion more per year to catch the Russians.

Reagan's Pentagon transition team, led by University of Southern California professor William Van Cleave, reportedly called for annual increases of about $30 billion to $40 billion. Van Cleave himself is regarded by some conservatives and by outgoing Carter administration officials as an ideologue on defense issues. They say he gave unwarranted assurances to the military about Reagan budget plans and leaked his convictions to the press in order to pressure Reagan to adopt his recommendations. Van Cleave apparently has been frozen out of Reagan's new Pentagon hierarchy, headed by former HEW secretary and budget director Caspar Weinberger and former deputy CIA director Frank Carlucci. These two have the advantage of being experienced managers, rather than ideologues, but they know very little about defense. Weinberger, if he lives up to his "Cap the knife" reputation as a budget-cutter, can be expected to be skeptical about the military's shopping lists in order to keep Pentagon increases down and his friend Ronald Reagan's economic priorities intact.

But Weinberger is likely to be bombarded from three sides to push for big increases. The ideologues may be out of the Pentagon, but not out of the Reagan administration, Congress, or the Republican party. These ideologues think that the Soviet Union is about to take over the world and that only US "resolve"—measured at least partly in defense dollars—will stop a general collapse. If Weinberger and Reagan fail to recommend huge defense increases, they are likely to say the administration has reneged on its promises to restore America to its position of greatness in the world. Second, a not-so-ideological group of traditionalists in Congress and in Alexander Haig's State Department will call for substantial increases because, in terms of tanks, artillery, and general defense expenditures, the Soviets really are ahead of the United States. In other areas where they aren't ahead, such as ships and nuclear warheads, they are gaining fast. And what's more, in terms of equipment readiness, skill of personnel, and morale, US military forces fall far short of our own standards. Pragmatic arguments such as these affected even Jimmy Carter, who started out wanting to cut defense spending and ended up increasing it. Having criticized Carter for letting the country's defenses go limp, the Republicans will demand some spending increases just to demonstrate muscle. The third source of pressure on Weinberger, of course, will be the military services, which will lecture him about why this and that weapons system simply cannot be done without.

If he is really an open thinker and a zero-based budgeteer, Weinberger at least ought to give some time to a fourth group of defense analysts with a novel basic proposition: the problem with American defense is that its strategies are wrong. If new strategies are adopted, this group contends, the US can have a substantially stronger defense *without* huge increases in spending. This is no clutch of doves. Its leader is a retired Air Force colonel, John Boyd, whose ideas revolutionized aerial combat in the 1950s and led to the design of America's newest generation of fighters, the F-15 and the F-16. Some of Boyd's disciples and intellectual soul mates include defense analyst Steven L. Canby; Canby's consulting partner, Edward Luttwak; and William Lind, legislative aide to Senator Gary Hart

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of Colorado. Hart is the group's major congressional convert, though some young House Republicans also are attracted. The group's ideas are explored in depth in a forthcoming book, *National Defense*, by former White House speechwriter James Fallows. Without waiting for that book to come out, Weinberger could call the Heritage Foundation for a copy of a study Heritage commissioned and has circulated in a limited way, called "An Alternative Analysis of the State of US General Purpose Forces." Or he could call Boyd in and receive his fascinating four and one-half hour briefing on military history and strategy.

The basic thrust of the Boyd group's argument is that the US armed forces—land, sea, and air—are mired in a heavy, expensive, static strategy of firepower attrition predicated on the idea that US forces can overwhelm an enemy by superior firepower and technology. The critics of this strategy say it is a modern-day version of the ponderous, set-piece battle plans of the British in the American Revolution, an update of costly World War I trench warfare and France's Maginot Line defense in early World War II. To give the present strategy its due, it is also the strategy that Grant used to overwhelm Lee in the Civil War and one that ultimately defeated Germany in the two world wars.

THE ALTERNATIVE strategy favored by the Boyd group is called maneuver warfare. It calls for routing the enemy with fast thrusts at its weak points, rather than by overpowering it with superior numbers of soldiers and weapons. The group claims this style of warfare is what won the American Revolution, enabled Lee and Stonewall Jackson to operate against overwhelming odds in the Civil War, and was the basis of German blitzkrieg tactics in World War II. It is the sort of high-tempo, opportunistic style of war employed by the Israelis and by the Communist guerrillas who frustrated us in Vietnam. It is also the official land-war doctrine of the Soviet Union. Boyd group members believe the Soviets have the power to make this strategy work, whereas NATO, although overall it spends more on defense than the Warsaw Pact and, counting France, actually has more troops, might fail to contain a Soviet attack. They claim we lack the right equipment, doctrine, and organization, not money.

According to Steven Canby, the land-war expert in Boyd's group, the US-NATO war plan for Europe calls for resisting a Soviet attack by throwing massive firepower across a broad front, whereas the Soviets aim to push through weak points and surround our forces from the rear. Unfortunately, American units haven't the machinery or the combat personnel they need to perform their task. Our units have twice as many support personnel (cooks, mechanics, clerks, and communications specialists) for each combat soldier as the Russians have, but we have fewer tanks and artillery pieces. And our equipment tends to be overly complicated, heavy, expensive, hard to maintain and move. American doctrine makes each soldier a "replacement"—cannon fodder—rather than an integral part of an ongoing unit. Personnel turnover is high—as much as 100 percent a year in our units in Europe—and morale is low.

Canby recommends no reduction of American forces in Europe, but thinks our troops should be reorganized into greater numbers of smaller divisions, each with fewer suport personnel, more combat soldiers, and larger numbers of smaller, lighter, and cheaper tanks. He says morale and cohesiveness can be increased by keeping individuals and units together permanently, possibly in some variation of the British regimental system.

WHAT'S IMMEDIATELY important to Weinberger and the Reagan team, though, is the promise of sizable savings on defense. Canby says the Pentagon budget will have to be increased by three percent a year for five years in order to purchase the kind of smaller, cheaper, and less sophisticated new planes, tanks, and ships that the US needs. But Canby claims that major savings can be realized, too, if NATO drops its current dependence on rapid and massive troop reinforcement from the United States in case of war and relies instead on well-trained reserve forces in the European countries. The United States then would not have to spend huge amounts on air- and sealift convoys for Europe, and could use its present capacity for defending the Persian Gulf. That would be possible if the US plans to defend much of the Gulf area with a Rapid Deployment Force made up mainly of light infantry (operating on foot and in helicopters) rather than of heavy tanks and armored personnel carriers. One proposal in the Heritage study calls for the Marine Corps to become America's rapid deployment force and for the Army to concentrate on the defense of Europe and Korea.

The Boyd group has similar smaller/cheaper/lighter proposals to make for the Navy and Air Force. Instead of building huge, expensive, and vulnerable aircraft carriers, for example, we should buy greater numbers of lighter and harder-to-target ships. Instead of electronics-laden, costly, and hard-to-maintain fighter planes, the group recommends deploying small "tank killer" fighters and ground-support airplanes.

There are good reasons for Weinberger to be skeptical about the Boyd group's suggestions, which one critic calls "the doctrine of cheap and cheerful." For one thing, they may not live up to their promise of saving money. Even if they do—perhaps especially if they do—they might meet such fierce resistance from the military services that the political fuss would not be worth the trouble. If it's true, as critics charge, that American military officers now tend to be bureaucrats and managers more than they are combat soldiers—people who study computers and political science rather than military history—then it may be impossible to get them to change basic strategies. What would

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Alexander Haig's reaction be, in view of his background in the present military system and his command of a NATO force committed to the traditional firepower-attrition strategy? By all reports, Haig will have a major role in defense policy as well as diplomacy.

So Weinberger should tread carefully. But as long as he is learning his job, he at least ought to consider the possibility that the Boyd group may be right. Some more members of Congress ought to do the same. It is clear that the American military must be improved. It wasn't only weak-minded civilians who blew the operation in the Iranian desert. It isn't only money problems that make US tank crews consistently lose gunnery competition with NATO allies and that make XM-1 battle tanks too big and heavy for the airplanes designed to carry them. All the money the Reagan administration and the country can afford probably won't close the equipment gaps between the US and the Soviet Union. So the incoming administration ought to rethink the current military system. If Reagan, Haig, and Weinberger agree it ought to be changed, they are the hawks who have a chance to change it.

Morton Kondracke

From the *New York Times*
to the State Department.

Rick Burt Steps Down

The *New York Times* seems well on its way to becoming a fully accredited prep school for the State Department. Four years ago, Leslie Gelb quit his job as *Times* national security correspondent to become Cyrus Vance's assistant secretary for politico-military affairs. Last month the man who replaced Gelb at the *Times*, Richard Burt, also took off for officialdom—a spot on Alexander Haig's transition team, preliminary to getting Gelb's former State Department post as well.

Gelb and Burt are two very different men, in manner and ideology, but both represent something new in American journalism—a deliberate experiment by the *Times* Washington bureau to hire academic or ex-government specialists to cover national security affairs. Gelb had been in the Pentagon's international security affairs office in the 1960s and, later, at the Brookings Institution. Before going to the *Times*, Burt was assistant director of the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies, and a regular player on the Atlantic Community's international establishment seminar circuit.

The idea that reporters should know something about the topic they cover certainly has its appeal. It means, in defense reporting, that readers get someone who knows what "equivalent megatonnage" means, who can deal with the natty jargon of modern strategy without bowling over in confusion or leaping joyfully like an infant approaching a new toy. But there are drawbacks as well. Few who descend into the dark pit of strategic studies emerge without a very distinct set of convictions. In Burt's case particularly, this phenomenon colored the way the defense world was covered in America's most important newspaper.

Burt came to the *Times* as a devotee of the "fairly rational hawk" faction in the defense debate, and that's the view that *Times* readers saw. Not much to the left of that position entered the paper during the past few years. John Finney, who had a somewhat skeptical attitude on strategic matters, abandoned reporting to become news editor. The other regular on the security beat has been the gentlemanly but quite hawkish Drew Middleton.

Burt got some decent scoops in his short *Times* career, and occasionally banged out a balanced news analysis. But in the main, Burt's own views tended to dominate his articles, even in straightforward, ostensibly objective news stories. This tendency showed up dramatically in leaked stories given to Burt in the early days of the SALT II negotiations. Nearly every compromise reached during the talks was presented on page one of the *Times* as a US concession. Only those readers who made it through the last quarter of the articles learned of concessions that the Soviets had made in the same round. Similarly, when, on June 16, 1978, Burt reported that senior foreign and defense policy officials were pushing the White House to make sure SALT doesn't prohibit mobile missiles (such as the MX), it was only because Burt himself was also concerned. Never did Burt serve as conduit for those pushing positions from the other side of the spectrum.

On March 21, 1979, Burt wrote about how the loss of the Tacksman radar site in Iran might affect verification of the SALT II treaty. A gloomy picture was painted. Contrary evidence—that ex-CIA deputy director Herbert Scoville Jr. had argued in a briefing that these radars were not needed to verify the provisions of SALT II; that other radars in the Aleutians and the Pacific, as well as satellites and other means of monitoring, could do the trick—appeared in paragraph 21. Senator Henry Jackson was warning of "irreparable harm" as early as paragraph eight.

By contrast, in a piece about Soviet civil defense, Burt's lead sentence—"The CIA says that Soviet civil defense preparations are unlikely to blunt the ability of the United States to retaliate in the event of nuclear war"—was followed immediately, in the same paragraph, by the caveat: "This assessment appears to differ somewhat from the views of military people in the Defense Department."

The structure of Burt's stories will keep semioticians enthralled for years to come. Take the lead from

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April 3, 1978: "In a move that has provoked furious criticism from the Pentagon, Secretary of State Cyrus R. Vance has asked President Carter to expedite a proposal by the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency calling for an international ban on the production of material used in nuclear weapons." Reading way down in the piece, one learns that Defense officials are upset only because they "learned of the Vance letter after it had been submitted to the White House." Nothing so dramatic or unusual here. In any event, Burt never led off a story with something like, "In a memo that has infuriated State Department officials, Harold Brown (or Zbigniew Brzezinski). . . ."

The neutron bomb episode was a similar instance. Burt's lead on February 1, 1978: "Pentagon officials are strongly objecting to a new Arms Control and Disarmament Agency report that concludes that American deployment of the neutron bomb could increase chances of nuclear war. The officials fear that the study . . . could jeopardize Congressional approval of funds for the neutron bomb." This was a particularly nice case of Evans and Novak journalism, for such an ACDA report simply did not exist. ACDA had prepared an Arms Control Impact Statement on the bomb, as it does with virtually every weapon; but, as with most such statements, it was very bland and even-handed. No doubt someone in the Pentagon leaked a portion of the statement, with an eye toward arousing the pro-neutron bomb lobby. Burt allowed himself to be its servant.

THE NEUTRON bomb provides an illustration of how Burt was wittingly used by factions in the defense debate. On April 14, 1978, Burt revealed that Carter was about to cancel the neutron bomb. Toward the end of that piece, Burt wrote: ". . . some top officials are said to be hoping that Mr. Carter might be persuaded this week to delay outright cancellation of the weapon and simply announce a decision to defer production indefinitely . . . [thus leaving] open the possibility of deploying the neutron weapon at a later date." On April 5, 1978, Burt's headline: "Carter Is Reported Reconsidering a Ban on the Neutron Bomb." April 6: "Pressure from Congress Mounts to Reverse Ban on Neutron Bomb." April 7: "Carter Said to Favor Delay in Production of the Neutron Bomb." On April 8, Burt reports Carter's announcement of a delay, not a cancellation. On April 9, Burt writes a lengthy "news analysis" of the entire episode. All in a week's work.

Burt's "news analyses" were especially tendentious. His several articles on the MX missile were typical. Burt would muster all the arguments for developing the missile and its bizarre "multiple-shelter" basing scheme, citing "Administration officials" and other experts, and then, two-thirds down in the piece, he would devote one paragraph to reciting the views of critics, "such as" George McGovern and Senator Mark Hatfield. The clear message: whom are you going to believe—responsible strategic thinkers or a man who just a few years ago wanted to slash the defense budget in half and another who is a religious pacifist? Unlike other reporters, Burt did not mention that MX critics also included such stalwarts as former chairman of the Joint Chiefs Maxwell Taylor, former secretary of defense Melvin Laird, and CIA director Stansfield Turner.

Burt aficionados particularly enjoyed his treatment of the squabble over whether the United States should substantially expand its civil defense program. In the early autumn of 1978, while *Times* reporters were on strike, Burt had several conversations on civil defense with then colonel William Odom, a Brzezinski aide, and Bardyl Tirana, head of the Pentagon's forlorn civil defense agency. On November 13, shortly after the *Times* resumed operations, Burt's headline read: "Carter Adopts a Program to Bolster Civil Defense in a Nuclear Attack: Plan Calls for Doubling Annual Spending in 5 Years, to Keep Pace with Moves Made in Soviet Union." It seemed that a presidential directive, based on an interagency review, was calling for a seven-year, two-billion-dollar civil defense program. According to Burt, "The new program is characterized by White House aides as a significant turnabout in American strategic policy."

But President Carter in fact had made no final decision. The Burt story was part of a campaign, launched by Odom and Tirana, to box Carter in. On November 30, Carter held a press conference, explicitly denied that the program would cost two billion dollars, and downplayed the significance of civil defense generally. Around the same time, the Office of Management and Budget was slashing the next year's civil defense budget request by half, down to $110 million, just slightly above its normal level.

On December 5, after the OMB decision but before Carter's final action, Burt sprang back with an extraordinarily lengthy "Issue and Debate" feature on civil defense. It was a very confusing article, reciting Carter's denial of a two-billion-dollar program, but also asserting, in the same paragraph: "Nevertheless, it is viewed by some experts [Burt?] as constituting a turnabout in American strategic policy." Later in the story: "Defense Department and White House civil defense advocates appear to have won this debate." Then again, next paragraph: "But judging by the tentative way Mr. Carter talked about an increase for civil defense financing last week, it is clear that the civil defense debate is still open. This debate is likely to spread to Capitol Hill. . . ." In short, a rather murky attempt to create an "issue and debate" where none existed. The whole episode gave every appearance—and several officials have no doubt—that Burt was in active collusion with Odom and Tirana to promote and then to save the expanded civil defense program.

Burt was used a lot in his days at the *Times*, but only by those he found compatible. On April 24, 1979, Burt printed a leak that the 75-mile-range Soviet SS-21 nuclear missile was being placed in East Germany, and

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noted that this "has already led some military officials and aides in the National Security Council to suggest that it might be timely to review Mr. Carter's" decision to postpone building the neutron bomb. A few days later, the *Washington Post* revealed that it was all an intelligence error: no SS-21s were being moved into East Germany. If this made it no longer timely to think about reviving the neutron bomb, Richard Burt failed to report as much.

Throughout his tenure at the *Times*, and especially from early 1978 on, Burt was extremely dependent on Zbigniew Brzezinski and a few of his assistants at the NSC. Hodding Carter's remark about that connection—that when you read Richard Burt, you see Zbigniew Brzezinski's lips moving—is well known and widely appreciated as valid. Brzezinski even offered Burt two jobs while Burt was a *Times* reporter and Burt felt sufficiently enticed by the prospects to bring the offers to the attention of his bureau chief, who reminded Burt of their agreement that he would stay at the *Times* for at least three years.

But Burt was not merely Brzezinski's puppet. First, he did have other sources (though not many at State, where most officials considered him a "loose cannon on the deck," a "liar," or a "xerox machine for the military"). Second, and more important, Burt came to the job with views that happened to match those of Brzezinski, who considered himself the lone realist in an administration of lawyerly weaklings. It was only natural that the two would hit it off well. Indeed, on November 30, 1980, Burt gave Zbig a little going-away gift called "Brzezinski Calls Democrats Soft on Moscow," in which—"in an interview that touched on his experience in the White House and his thoughts about the future"—Brzezinski was allowed to condemn his fellow Democrats for their " 'excessive preoccup[ation] with what might be called the do-gooders agenda in international affairs,' " and to "endorse Mr. Reagan's recent support for the concept called 'linkage' "—the notion of holding arms control treaties contingent on Soviet good behavior elsewhere in the world. Burt also duly noted that Brzezinski would "establish what he called a 'base' for himself in Washington." The former national security adviser has since found a home at the Republican-dominated Georgetown Center for Strategic and International Studies.

While Burt often was seeing Brzezinski several times a week, he was also giving occasional, very informal, advice to his former London colleague, Robert Ellsworth, when, halfway through Carter's term, Ellsworth began writing defense position papers for the Republican National Committee. Burt firmly denies any participation in such partisan affairs. *Times* reporter and former Washington bureau chief Hedrick Smith, who recommended that the *Times* hire Burt in mid-1977, also doubts the connection, claiming full satisfaction with Burt's "integrity and effectiveness as a reporter." But several sources, including more than one Republican insider, insist the story is true.

At any rate, Burt's appointment to the Reagan State Department surprised no one. One wonders whether, as director of the Politico-Military Bureau, Burt will heed his own past words. In the Fall 1979 issue of *Foreign Policy* Burt expressed concern about State Department interference with the Pentagon's business. He criticized the "expansion in the number of State Department officials focusing on military problems, particularly in the Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs." He especially criticized the way that this office seemed "to be evolving into a little Defense Department" and was "becoming a competitive center for defense analysis." No doubt he will avoid this dangerous self-assertion, now that he is in charge.

In fact, Burt probably carried more weight at the *Times* than he ever will be allowed at the State Department. He joined the paper at a time when the Soviets started making advances in certain types of weaponry, when detente began its skid, when the right was getting organized and funded with unusual skill and imagination, and when liberal opposition in security affairs was drying up. The way Burt tilted his stories, the way he managed the leads, the particular set of sources he continually exploited and, more to the point, the particular litany of positions and assumptions that he brought with him to his new role as journalist—all served to amplify the alarm bells warning of the Soviet threat, and to muffle voices of dissent. Richard Burt certainly did not cause the decline of detente, the death of SALT II, or the new cycle in the arms race. But he did make sure, under the guise of objective reporting, that all the right signals got across to the serious newspaper-reading public with a minimum of confusing qualifications.

Fred Kaplan

Fred Kaplan is at work on a book about the origins of nuclear strategy.

Unwanted, but friendly, advice for President Reagan.

Foreign Policy Agenda

May Ronald Reagan have a happy inauguration. The honeymoon won't last long, so he might as well enjoy it. Indeed the fun part is nearly over: shining the boots and choosing new wallpaper for a descent upon Washington, assembling a dream team of eager helpers, sharpening a meat cleaver for amputation of liberal flab, conjuring visions of a hymn-humming nation marching purposefully against the evils of collectivism, creeping porn, and sagging productivity.

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At the moment there is hardly anyone who does not wish him well. He is such a genial fellow, so eager to clean up the perpetual mess in Washington, so convinced he can make America loved and respected again, so decent that you would want him for your next-door neighbor so that you could borrow a can of car wax for the old jalopy. He would even give you a hand.

Reagan is going to need some helping hands if he is to make even a dent in the problems he has promised to solve. He is not, to the dismay of his fundamentalist friends, going to turn Washington upside down or the nation around 180 degrees. America doesn't work that way. The country is too decentralized, its contentious pressure groups too powerful. All too soon Reagan is likely to start pondering the words of Harry Truman, as he passed on the reins to his successor. "Poor Ike," Truman said of a man used to giving orders and having them obeyed. "He'll say, 'Do this' and 'Do that' and nothing at all will happen."

The problem Reagan faces from the start is that the simple homilies that won him the office he holds are not going to be much help in changing situations that neither he nor most of the country much likes. Everyone wants the nation to be militarily secure, self-sufficient in energy, crime-free, inflation-proof, and on an unending escalator to new heights of prosperity. But if he is to get from here to there, Reagan will have to put aside his ideological blinkers, bid adieu to some comfortable platitudes that have served him well during years of running for office, and make some hard decisions. He is going to discover that some of the things he wants can be gained only at the expense of others that he wants equally, and to get anything at all he will have to swallow some of his assumptions. Here liberals can help articulate, and even direct, the choices to be made.

In foreign affairs the problems are clear. Reagan did not invent them. But some of the contradictions are his very own.

The military budget. Reagan, having pledged to "build up our defensive strength to the point that no other nation is going to dare to challenge us," will now have to figure out what that means. So far he has been hazy on figures. Former defense secretary Melvin Laird proposes an annual increase of six percent after inflation. This means a boost in spending from $160 billion this year to $485 billion by 1985. Some Reagan advisers are even talking of a seven percent real increase.

Americans seem convinced that the nation is on the verge of becoming a pitiful, helpless giant. People support a bigger military budget on the assumption that this will make us stronger and more respected. Certainly we don't seem to be getting very much for our money as it is. The all-volunteer army is exorbitantly costly and inefficient. The strategic nuclear forces are wastefully redundant. And the services are in their usual state of internecene warfare. The nation's military arm, upon which it has lavished its resources so generously, gives every sign of being unprepared for the kind of tasks it is most likely to be called upon to perform.

Republicans, taking a leaf from the Democrats' book, seem to assume that the best way of dealing with the problem is to throw money at it. Although this is a touching note of bipartisanship, it is directly at odds with their promise to cut the federal budget and dampen inflation. More interestingly, it also contradicts their pledge to encourage economic growth. Although a big boost in the military budget might help unemployment, it would divert resources from consumption goods and the investment needed for growth. This has been the American pattern for the past three decades, when capital and technology have been siphoned off into military areas at the expense of the civilian sector. By contrast, Japan's success story is due in large part to its low military budget. A recent study by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development shows an inverse relationship between the proportion of gross national product devoted to defense and the growth rate.

Does Reagan want growth and economic solvency? Or does he want a bigger bang for more bucks? Here he is truly going to have to bite the bullet.

Arms control. Although SALT II is a dirty phrase among Reaganites, there is no way the administration can balance the budget, reduce taxes, and tackle inflation without putting a brake on the nuclear weapons race. This means an arms control accord with the Soviets that would limit their missile build-up and allow the US to concentrate scarce resources on its non-nuclear forces. SALT, no matter how disguised in a plain Republican cloth coat, will have to be resuscitated if Reagan is to achieve any of his economic objectives. He can have an unfettered arms race or a revitalized economy, but not both.

The MX missile. Carter embraced this brontosaurus, let us recall, not because it would enhance American security, but as a way of buying off Senate hawks so that they would support the SALT II treaty. As usual, the ploy backfired. Carter lost on SALT and got stuck with the MX. Having painted himself into a corner (he could hardly repudiate what he had so ardently embraced as part of the payoff), he and Harold Brown set out to elaborate a strategic theory—counterforce—that would justify a weapon that is utterly illogical *except* as part of a SALT treaty limiting a compensatory Soviet missile build-up.

The chickens have come home to roost. But now the yard is Reagan's. The right-wing senators who were

Coming:

Morton Kondracke on Moles.

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boosting the MX in order to generate national potency anxieties, and undermine SALT, are now in disorderly retreat. Such super-hawks as Jake Garn of Utah and Paul Laxalt of Nevada are under pressure from constituents who do not want their way of life destroyed so that the Air Force can dig 4,600 holes to serve as a "sponge" for Soviet missiles.

Rather than looking for a new place to act as a sponge, Reagan has a perfect opportunity to drop the whole thing. The MX never made any sense from a strategic point of view, and it is an ecological and economic disaster. It would mutilate vast areas of the southwest, drain resources from the modernization of conventional forces, and—at a projected cost of $50-$100 billion—sabotage the administration's hopes for economic recovery. If Nixon could recognize Red China, Reagan can scuttle that Democratic albatross, the MX.

The Persian Gulf. Access to the oil of the Persian Gulf is an American security interest. So is an all-out program to reduce dependency on that oil through conservation and use of renewable resources. That is everybody's business, not just that of environmentalists and Democrats. But since we and our allies will need Middle Eastern oil for a long time to come, we cannot allow it to be shut off capriciously. Whence comes the threat? Not from the Soviets this time, as the big missile boys would have it, but from the Gulf states themselves. Remember the Iranian revolution and the Iran-Iraq war?

THE CARTER administration, looking for a quick fix to bolster its image, leased some tropical real estate in the Indian Ocean for a naval base and conjured up an all-purpose fix-it team labeled the Rapid Deployment Force. We got a preview of the RDF during the helicopter sortie into the Iranian sands last spring. The RDF and the Indian Ocean build-up may be useful in the long run, but so far they have been based on a faulty premise. The main threat to oil access is not a huffy and puffing Russian bear, but collapsing semi-feudal regimes around the Gulf. The real lesson has to be drawn from the disintegration of the shah's police state and the attack on the Mecca mosque. In this sense, Qaddafi's ambitions in the area are more destabilizing than Brezhnev's, and this is the problem to which the RDF and US diplomacy should primarily be addressed.

Arabs and Israelis. Yes, we all know that the Arab-Israeli squabble is, if not the least of the problems roiling the Middle East, only one of a host. Even if it were miraculously settled by divine intercession, the area no doubt would be just as contentious as it is today. But the point is that the continued festering of the Palestinian issue is not good for Israel's soul or its security. And the squandering of the international support Israel enjoyed during the first two decades of its existence has disastrously diminished that security.

The United States has no interest in the perpetuation of the dispute between Arabs and Israelis. Indeed, we have a vital stake in trying to resolve it. Yet the Reagan team, in its obsession with Moscow, is drawing up plans to turn Israel into an advance base of American military power. If anything is designed to draw the Russians into the area and inflame Arab radicalism, this is it. American interests can be protected only by pacifying the area, not by uniting the contentious Arabs against us. Keep your eye on the fundamentals, Mr. President. In the Middle East it's instability and Arab radicalism.

China. Forget the ritualistic genuflections toward Taiwan and the ghost of the G-mo. That's just Reagan's 1950-ish sentimentality and a sop to a fundamentalist right brought up on vintage Henry Luce and Joe Alsop. The real danger is that Reagan's *Machtpolitik* zealots might try to turn the China card into an explicit anti-Soviet alliance. The changes have been so fast—now verging on open military collaboration—that it is hard to remember that only a few years ago Americans singled out China as fomenter of world revolution and public enemy number one.

Why not a Washington-Peking alliance? Because it could well blow up in our face—literally. First, it would embroil the United States in China's territorial ambitions, including its claims against vast areas of the USSR. Second, it could trigger an unsettling Russian reaction, either in the form of a virulent belligerency based on the old fear of encirclement, or an overture to China to restore the old Sino-Soviet alliance on different terms. Warning to Reagan: beware of tough guys leading you into the dragon's lair. The last time the US went that way it ended up fighting a four-year war in the Pacific.

Allies. The conventional wisdom in the Reagan camp is that there is only one reason why the Europeans and the Japanese refuse to shape up: because the US has been a wishy-washy leader. If only Uncle Sam would show a little willpower and stand up to the Russkies, they assert, the allies would gratefully fall into line. Dutifully they would beef up their military budgets and observe whatever boycotts we might choose to impose upon Moscow. If Reagan pursues this line he is likely to bring on a full-blown crisis within NATO. The Europeans have a vital interest in detente, however unprincipled that may seem to Washington. They would not jeopardize it over Afghanistan, and they probably will not give up on detente even if Poland degenerates into another Czechoslovakia. And they will not go along with actions they feel are counter to their own interests, however vigorously they are courted. Consultation and common policies may be boring for a superpower, but they are the price of an alliance.

Central America. Here Reagan faces a great opportunity, and potentially a great disaster. Mexico now has to be taken seriously, not because it is near and dear, but because it has become a major oil and gas exporter. No more "Poor Mexico, so far from God, so near the

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United States," as Porfirio Diaz used to say. Now Washington sits up and takes notice, Governor Bill Clements of Texas makes state visits to Mexico City, and Reagan judiciously meets with President Lopez Portillo at the border.

What do they talk about? Oil and Central America. Those funny little banana republics, once the playthings of Wall Street accountants and assistant secretaries of state, are now a serious matter. Washington cannot control them, and neither can the caudillos who were installed, either by the Marines or by the banana companies, to provide a favorable climate for business. Nor are the Mexicans now willing to sit on the sidelines. They want a voice in what happens to their little neighbors to the south. Being conservatives themselves, they have no more use for revolutionaries than do the gringos. But they also know that it is no longer possible to prop up the old order, and that if moderate change is thwarted, violent change is virtually inevitable. And it could spill over across their border.

The Reaganites, however, have decided to throw down the gauntlet in Central America. Having lost on the Panama Canal, they are going to make a test case of El Salvador and Nicaragua. *Non passeran*. The United States must show its will to combat left-wing radicalism, they argue, and Central America has been the traditional US game preserve. It is time to stand up for our friends. Torturers they may be, but at least they are our torturers. If these hard-liners get their way, we can expect full-scale civil war in El Salvador, bringing in both Nicaragua and the Cubans; an explosion in Guatemala; and a crisis between the US and Mexico. Just what we need.

Human Rights. To the hard-liners, whoever is not fully with us is against us. Thus human rights goes by the boards, unless, of course, it is the Soviets who are doing the abusing. It is obvious that this is callous and deeply subversive of America's own values. But it is also impractical and contrary to our nation's long-term interests. Maintaining repressive regimes in power through American arms only ensures that the opposition, when it comes to power, will be bitterly anti-American. Witness Iran. This is not a policy likely to protect American interests, and the only ones likely to benefit from it are the Soviets. By naming Jeane Kirkpatrick, an outspoken sympathizer of support for "our" tyrants, as ambassador to the United Nations, Reagan has made a cheering gesture to hard-core anti-radicals that is likely to cost the US dear in the third world.

If Ronald Reagan is to avoid the fate of Warren Harding, an amiable nonentity who became the instrument of feuding manor lords until he expired out of sheer irrelevance, he will have stop playing everybody's good guy. This means choosing among policies that are irreconcilable. The campaign is over, and so is the time for sloganeering. Just as coherent foreign policy for the United States is more than a spastic tremor of anti-communism, so national security is more than posturing, ultimatums, and nuclear megaliths.

The fight is on for control of the White House. Time to put away your boots, Ronald Reagan, and be Mr. President.

Ronald Steel

Looking for wasteful bureaucrats, Mr. President? They've got you surrounded.

The Secret Service's Biggest Secret

by Stephen Chapman

When Ronald Reagan gets finished with all his inaugural festivities and sits down with his red pencil to start cutting out useless expenditures in the federal budget, he will find one agency embodies most of the accusations Reagan has leveled at Washington over the last 25 years. It is one of those agencies set up with a reasonable idea in mind, but which over the years has grown into something its creators would barely recognize. It exists purely for the benefit of a very small class of favored people, who have grown quite accustomed to this special treatment and who would raise an unholy howl if anyone ever tried to withdraw it. It has grown rapidly in recent years, not for any outwardly logical reason but due mostly to the bureaucratic urge to expand. It could be cut back with no great loss to the citizenry or any grave danger to the Republic. But it almost certainly won't be, if only because the

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principal beneficiary of this little bureaucracy as of January 20 is Ronald Reagan.

The agency in question is the Secret Service, not the sort of bureaucracy Reagan normally has in mind when he criticizes the federal government. But the critique applies as well to the Secret Service as it does to the Interstate Commerce Commission or the Veterans Administration. Reagan could make a grand symbolic start to his administration by announcing a reduction in the Secret Service's budget and personnel. This would demonstrate that Reagan is willing to make sacrifices along with everyone else during the austere days ahead. It also would demonstrate Reagan's understanding of one of his own favorite philosophical points—that some problems (in this case the risk of presidential assassinations) simply can't be solved by throwing government money at them. In fact, Reagan could use this opportunity to take the sort of mundane measures that actually would reduce the danger of his being assassinated—measures which have been avoided partly because of the illusion of security provided by the omnipresent Secret Service agents that surround every president and presidential candidate.

The Secret Service, which is an agency of the Treasury Department, was originally set up in 1865 with no thought of protecting presidents. Its primary concern was pursuing counterfeiters. Only in 1901, following the assassination of President McKinley, was it given the additional responsibility of protecting the president. Even this modest expansion of its duties wasn't made permanent until 1951, after two Puerto Rican nationalists tried to shoot President Truman. The real boom, however, came after the assassination of President Kennedy. Some of the new laws had only symbolic value, such as making it a federal crime to attack the president or the vice president. But others greatly expanded the obligations of the Secret Service. In 1965 protection was provided for any former president and his wife, and in 1968 it was granted to widows of former presidents until their remarriage, and to children of former presidents until they reached age 16. Immediately after Robert Kennedy's murder, Congress extended protection to all major presidential and vice presidential candidates.

Besides the responsibility of guarding presidential candidates, the Secret Service also has been charged with protecting foreign heads of state and embassies. The latter duty incidentally provides a few wealthy Washington neighborhoods an extra layer of police protection, a luxury often mentioned in the local real estate classified ads.

The result of these new duties has been a dizzying rise in the Secret Service's size and budget. In 1963 the agency employed ony 525 people (plus 170 White House police, who are now called the Secret Service Uniformed Division) and spent barely five million dollars annually. By 1970 the number of employees had risen to 1,660, and the budget to $27 million. Since

drawing by Vint Lawrence

then, however, the Secret Service has grown at a rate that would make most bureaucratic empire-builders salivate. The total number of employees has more than doubled in the last decade and, even more impressively, the total budget has risen to $159 million—a nearly sixfold increase in a decade.

Now, no one is in favor of endangering the lives of presidents, their families, former presidents, their families, presidential candidates, or even foreign embassy personnel. But even when it comes to protecting lives, there are limits to what is reasonable, and the Secret Service has plainly exceeded these limits. The agency spends a good deal of time and money protecting people who can hardly be in much greater danger than the average citizen. One finds it implausible that Chip Carter is putting his life on the line every time he goes out to buy a six-pack, or that Lady Bird Johnson inhabits many people's homicidal fantasies. There is no particular logic to the categories of people guaranteed protection. It makes no sense to assume that Jacqueline Kennedy was in constant peril until her remarriage to Aristotle Onassis, and utterly secure thereafter. Nor, presumably, will Amy Carter be any less a magnet for psychos the day after she turns 16 than the day before. If thoroughness is the point, one can easily argue that the present coverage is altogether inadequate. If Chip Carter or Maureen Reagan can be presumed in danger, then why not Jack Ford, or for that matter Milton Eisenhower or Margaret Truman Daniel? If Mamie Eisenhower needs bodyguards, then

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who is to say Donald Nixon and Eunice Shriver are safe?

The most reasonable gauge of who needs protection and who doesn't might be the number and seriousness of threats such people receive. By law, however, the Secret Service must protect the aforementioned people whether or not they are ever threatened. It would be interesting to know how often Lady Bird or even Gerald Ford get crayoned letters promising their imminent demise, but this is information we shall never have. The agency, for ostensible security reasons, refuses to answer any questions about the volume and character of the threats its wards get. But it's hard to see what risk would be created by disclosing this information. So one may suspect that the real reason for the secrecy is that many of the people it protects get an embarrassingly meager ration of threatening correspondence.

In all the years of the great Secret Service boom, there have been no major attempts on the lives of presidential family members, or on former presidents, or on their families. On a list of people most likely to get shot at, most of these individuals (one can think of exceptions) would not rank very high. It is not surprising, for example, that John Lennon was a more tempting target for some lunatic than Rosalynn Carter. Henry Kissinger complained publicly about losing his Secret Service protection when he left office, and surely he is in at least as much danger as others who continue to get the full Secret Service treatment.

Since most of the people who get Secret Service protection are not evidently at greater risk than many citizens who don't get it, could it be that there is a greater national interest in protecting the families of presidents and former presidents than ordinary people from the violence of our society? I would like to hear a president attempt to justify such a proposition.

IT IS SOMETIMES argued that presidential family members must be protected because of the danger they could be kidnapped by terrorists wishing to affect national policy. But consider. Would a president pay a greater ransom for his own child than for, say, a busload of orphans chosen at random? If anything, it might be easier for the president to sacrifice his own child for the national interest. A rational terrorist, realizing this, would not chose the president's child to kidnap.

But most terrorists aren't rational, you say, and assassins certainly aren't rational. Of course. That is why trying to predict who might be the target of violence is a hopeless task, why any attempt to limit or cut off someone's protection makes the whole enterprise look futile if not callous, and why the amount spent on Secret Service protection can continue to grow without limit and without much discernible effect.

If the Secret Service were providing nothing more than a couple of heavies to discourage any ambitious young toughs from trying to make history by punching out a former first lady, this might be easier to justify. But all protectees, from the president on down, get the same treatment. If the president plans to visit Cleveland, for example, the agency will send some agents ahead to scout out his travel route for anything suspicious ("every step," says a spokesman). Then its agents meet with representatives of local and state police units to coordinate their efforts. Finally, they consider every person in the Cleveland area who has been imprudent enough to make his violent ill will to the president known to the Secret Service. All this may be sensible for a presidential visit. For anyone else, though, it seems a bit much. You might think that these elaborate precautions would not be taken every time Lady Bird makes a shopping trip to Houston. You would be wrong. Asked about that scenario, Jack Warner, a spokesman for the Secret Service, says firmly, "The process is the same for everyone. Only the number of personnel varies, depending on the notoriety of the person. We certainly would screen all the people in Houston who might be a threat. We wouldn't be doing our job otherwise."

HOW MUCH good all these measures do is also open to doubt. Despite the expanded efforts that followed the two Kennedy assassinations, the Secret Service still couldn't manage to prevent George Wallace's near fatal shooting in 1972. The attack on Wallace, of course, was the kind that is nearly impossible to prevent, the work of an unknown man waiting quietly in a crowd. The blame for its success lies not with the Secret Service, but with the assailant's shrewd tactics. Nor could the agency do much to foil the attempt made on Gerald Ford's life by Sara Jane Moore, who fired a pistol at Ford from across a street, luckily missing. (An agent did manage to grab Squeaky Fromme's gun before she could fire it at Ford only a few weeks earlier.) If an aspiring assassin has the presence of mind to write no threatening letters and to choose his moment and surroundings with some care, the Secret Service is almost helpless to keep him from accomplishing his mission. Perhaps the most revealing evidence on this matter comes from Jack Warner, who admits it is quite possible Lee Harvey Oswald would have succeeded in killing John Kennedy even if current Secret Service procedures had been followed in 1963. Even if presidential candidates had been protected in 1968, there's no reason to think Robert Kennedy would be alive today.

Even when it comes to protecting the president, then—who obviously is at great risk and whose safety obviously is a national concern—it ought to be recognized that there are limits. Avoiding assassinations fits perfectly the conservative paradigm of a social goal that is always receding in the distance, no matter how much tax money is spent on it. Nevertheless, every time the system fails, as it inevitably must, there are calls for redoubled effort. And not even conservatives

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are willing to say that the reduced risk, however speculative, achieved by the added cost, however great, is not worth it.

In fact, most of the dangers faced by current and former presidents, their families, and presidential aspirants are of their own making. If a president insists on riding through a city in an open car or on wading into crowds to press the flesh, he leaves himself wide open to attack, almost regardless of what his bodyguards do. Warner says that during his 1972 inauguration the agency asked President Nixon not to ride with his limousine window open, because trouble was expected. But Nixon ignored the request and drove unshielded through a barrage of eggs and other relatively harmless objects which could have been lethal projectiles. If a president insists on making such a display of his bravery, what is gained by surrounding him with bodyguards who only encourage this bravado? No doubt presidents and candidates would exercise more caution if they weren't always surrounded by Secret Service agents, who furnish a sense of security that is at least partly illusory. Warner says that the agency initiates its protection of each candidate by asking him not to ride in open cars or to shake hands in large crowds. Almost invariably, he admits, the advice is ignored. If they weren't protected by so many agents, candidates and presidents might be less reckless. Simply avoiding these two risks would do more to protect the lives of public figures than anything the Secret Service can do.

So the money spent on Secret Service protection doesn't protect lives so much as it protects egos, and traditional habits of campaigning. Pressing the flesh in crowds and riding in open cars hardly amounts to contact with the people in any genuine political sense. In fact, the elaborate vestment of Secret Service protection that descends around a man when he becomes a candidate for president and, if he wins, stays around him until he dies, probably does more than any other presidential perk to create an aura of imperial isolation. The protection for former presidents probably derives less from any practical fear for their safety than from a sense that suddenly removing all their attendants would be an affront to their dignity. (No good came of doing this to King Lear, you will recall.)

So a suggestion for President Reagan. He should announce that he will insist on a substantial reduction in the number of agents guarding him and his family and ask Congress to cut the Secret Service budget to reflect narrower responsibilities. He should go further and ask for changes in the law to put Secret Service protection at the discretion of the president or the treasury secretary, so that agents can be assigned to people who are actually in danger. He should declare that henceforth he will rely on television, radio, and newspapers to communicate with the American people and avoid appearances that expose him to serious risk, preferring to concentrate on running the country instead of repeatedly demonstrating his own manhood. He should inform the voters that if he is going to ask them to rely less on government solicitude, he is obliged and willing to do likewise himself. These measures would strike an impressive blow against the bureaucratic evils Reagan has made a career of denouncing. They might also make life safer for past, present, and future inhabitants of the White House.

A Democratic governor on taking federalism seriously.

States Rights for Liberals

by Bruce Babbitt

The ancient doctrine of states rights is ready for a fiery rhetorical revival, unmatched since the nullification era of John C. Calhoun. Strom Thurmond, once the presidential candidate of the States' Rights party, has been reborn as chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee. President-elect Ronald Reagan, echoing Calhoun, promises to "reinstitute this nation as a federation of sovereign states."

Senator Thurmond's agenda begins with repeal of the Voting Rights Act. Ronald Reagan, who once proposed selling off the Tennessee Valley Authority, would now begin by handing federal welfare programs back to the states. Western senators, with Reagan's support, are hawking the "Sagebrush Rebellion," a scheme to hand federal public lands over to the states.

It is all too easy to dismiss the states rights crowd as a bunch of nostalgic dreamers, misguided libertarians, and closet racists. Jimmy Carter, on the stump in Georgia, did just that, warning that states rights is nothing but a code word for racism. Andrew Young

Bruce Babbitt, a Democrat, is governor of Arizona.

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concurred, warning that it "looks like a code word to me that it is going to be all right to kill niggers. . . ."

But Democrats are misreading the public mood if they dismiss the rhetoric of states rights so casually. Jimmy Carter and Andy Young notwithstanding, states rights is also a code word for much of our constitutional history. States rights is a suggestive, if imprecise, term that sums up the growing reaction against a federal government grown too large, unresponsive, and expensive. For most Americans it is a phrase that still embodies, however vaguely, the limited government notions of Jefferson and Madison, the reserved powers clause of the 10th Amendment, and the evocative language of Tom Paine: "Let the crown . . . be scattered among the people whose right it is."

RONALD REAGAN began his campaign for federal divestiture back in the 1976 New Hampshire primary with an offhand proposal to turn welfare programs over to the states. Pressed for details by eager journalists sensing a big story, Reagan estimated that taking over welfare would require the states to spend an extra $90 billion; but he was unable to explain where that figure came from, precisely what programs would be transferred, or how the states could be expected to come up with another $90 billion in new tax resources. Soon the candidate fell back to his standard canard about the Chicago welfare queen grown fabulously rich swindling taxpayers by claiming benefits under scores of assumed names.

Despite the 1976 New Hampshire fiasco, Mr. Reagan again brought up welfare divestiture in the 1980 campaign, which suggests that it is more than a passing campaign crowd-pleaser. Welfare divestiture also appears in the 1980 Republican platform, which proclaims: "The Republican party supports the orderly, wholesale transfer of all welfare functions to the states." The 1980 divestiture model, however, benefiting from the mistakes of 1976, includes two significant new qualifications designed to placate critics. First, Reagan studiously avoids any estimates of the costs to the states of transferring welfare. Second, he repeatedly assures his audiences that welfare transfers will include "the sources of taxation to pay for them."

Some critics think they know why welfare is the guinea pig for Reagan's experiment in reviving federalism. Welfare programs not only are expensive and unpopular, they also happen to benefit a predominantly Democratic constituency. The states, so the criticism goes, will pay little attention to welfare, programs will be slashed, and thus the Reagan divestiture plan is nothing but a cleverly disguised method of reducing welfare or eliminating it altogether. An uncharitable critic also might point out that Reagan has made no such concrete proposals to get the federal government out of program areas that benefit Republican constituencies, such as highway construction, law enforcement, the arts, or even education.

Even if one suspects that Reagan's back-to-the-states proposals are just a thinly disguised method of dumping progressive social legislation, it still remains to prove to a skeptical public why welfare is not at least as good a place as any other to begin bringing the federal government under control. Is selling off the TVA a more reasonable proposal? Would it be better to begin by getting the federal government out of supporting the arts, or local law enforcement, or elementary education? Short of acquiescing in the status quo, anyone who opposes divestiture of welfare needs a defensible litmus test that can be applied to federal programs to determine which are legitimate federal functions and which are not.

The usual first step in sorting out governmental functions is an appeal to the high altar of the United States Constitution, an appeal that inevitably fails. The Constitution mandates a federal system, with states retaining a large measure of sovereignty, but it is notably vague on where the lines are to be drawn. The enumerated powers given to Congress in Section 8 of Article I are unworkably restrictive. The clause is saved only by the comprehensive phrase giving Congress power to provide for the "general welfare." Likewise the 10th Amendment, reserving to the states those powers "not delegated to the United States by the Constitution," is something less than a practical guide. Thus it is small wonder that, over the years, the Supreme Court has virtually given up trying to act as a referee between states and Congress, leaving Congress essentially free to meddle in whatever local matters catch its fancy.

THESE historical developments were perhaps inevitable, for a good constitution must be, in Napoleon's phrase, "short and obscure." The sorting out of governmental functions in a federal system is ultimately a political decision best left to political battlefields rather than to the cloistered reasoning of judges.

To date, however, efforts to use the political process for program sorting have not been encouraging. Back in the 1950s President Eisenhower warned, "those who would be free must stand eternal watch against concentration of power in government," and he appointed a blue ribbon committee of governors and cabinet officers to study the issue. After two years of intensive labors, the Kestenbaum Commission identified just two federal grant programs—vocational education and municipal waste treatment—as candidates for divestiture to the states. As a sweetener, the commission even proposed to return federal revenue sources to the states (in the form of a tax credit against the federal telephone tax), but its proposals were killed quickly in an indifferent Congress by aggressive education and municipal lobbies.

In 1969 the Advisory Committee on Intergovernmental Relations, a federal commission that grew out of the recommendations of the Kestenbaum Commission, recommended that welfare programs be federal-

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ized and that education programs be returned to the states. Again, nothing came of the proposals.

More recently, the same Advisory Committee on Intergovernmental Relations has published a 10-volume study of the structure of the federal system, which suggests a pragmatic three-part test as an approach to unscrambling governmental functions and assigning them to the proper level: (1) the history of local versus federal involvement, (2) the relative amount of federal financing, and (3) whether divestiture would result in destructive competition among the states.

The history test examines the extent to which programs have a strong tradition of state and local involvement and initiative. Law enforcement and the neighborhood school are prime examples. Each is a grassroots institution that evolved for more than 200 years with negligible federal money or mandates. Then the Great Society initiatives of the Johnson years flooded these institutions with money and regulations, in each case with few discernible results.

Disentangling the federal government from programs with such a strong tradition of local effort and such a short, controversial, and ineffectual history of federal involvement should not be impossible. (The judicial enforcement of civil rights is a separate and vital matter that need not be diminished by rearrangement of intergovernmental program responsibilities.)

A second sorting test is the relative amount of federal aid compared to the total governmental expenditures at all levels. If federal involvement is small, it should be easier to disengage. As might be expected, the degree of federal aid tends to relate to the history of local involvement. Programs traditionally centered at the local level, such as law enforcement and education, receive less federal support than newer programs, such as welfare and housing, that lack a strong history of local initiative. For example, federal aid to local police agencies is less than 10 percent of total law enforcement expenditures; federal support for elementary and secondary education, although perceived as pervasive, still constitutes less than 10 percent of the total expense by all levels of government, again suggesting that federal withdrawal should not create an excessive burden on state and local governments.

At the other end of the spectrum, federal aid for welfare and other public assistance programs is more than 50 percent of the total; and federal assistance for housing and urban renewal is more than 80 percent of the total. Highway construction and mass transit present an interesting intermediate case, with Washington accounting for about 26 percent of total intergovernmental expenditures.

The third test—"destructive competition"—simply suggests that some programs do not produce their own rewards, but rather tend to foster incentives to do less. Welfare is a good example. Without some means of federal equalization, a state providing adequate welfare benefits is at a disadvantage compared to those states with little or no program effort. A state that meets its obligations may be pressured by immigration from states that do not. Environmental laws provide an even clearer example of this effect. A state with stringent antipollution laws might be rewarded for its efforts by seeing its industry relocate to states that tolerate polluters.

By applying these criteria, it should be possible to sketch the outline of an objective sorting effort, more or less independent of one's political views about a particular program. Transfer payment programs such as welfare are, contrary to the Reagan proposals, prime candidates for a complete federal takeover along the lines of Social Security (which has been a wholly federal program since its inception in 1935). Transfer payments operate directly upon individual citizens; disparities among states create pressures to avoid responsibility; the federal government is already heavily involved; and the states historically have not been strong actors in this arena.

BY CONTRAST, the three tests suggest that the federal government could easily get out of elementary and secondary education, law enforcement, and probably most highway programs. The neighborhood school, the town constable, and, to a lesser degree, road building are venerable local functions with relatively little historic federal involvement. They also are programs that enjoy strong local support and that involve a high degree of local administrative effort not readily handled at the national level.

Transcending these mechanical tests, there is a broader consideration: whether a given federal program serves a truly essential national purpose, or whether it might be more accurately characterized as a matter that ought to be left for states and localities to spend their tax money on or not, as they please. Congressmen eager to invent new programs for their constituents might occasionally reflect on an incident involving S.I. Hayakawa during his Senate campaign in 1976. Asked by a voter for his views on a local controversy over dog racing, Hayakawa responded: "I don't give a good God damn about dog racing, I'm running for the United States Senate."

Political philosophy aside, it is hard to see why a national Congress, responsible for governing a continental nation, should be involved in formulating programs for rat control, humanities grants for town hall debates on capital punishment, sculpture commissions for local art museums, educating displaced homemakers, training for use of the metric system, jellyfish control, bike paths, and police disability grants.

It is long past time for Congress to dust off the *Federalist Papers*, reread the Constitution, and, occasionally, ask with the shades of Jefferson and Madison, "Is this truly a national concern?" Congress ought to be worrying about arms control and defense instead of the potholes in the street. We just might have both an increased chance of survival and better streets.

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Books and the Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on films

Politics East, Satire West

A kind of moral terrorism flourishes in criticism these days. This is a delicate subject to raise because inextricably mixed with the terrorism are true terrors; and because the artists involved are not themselves responsible for the terrorism. Here is the nub: art about Eastern Europe, produced by people under Soviet domination or recently escaped from it, is grievously overrated in the West by critics who are moved, or cowed, by its provenance.

Since I'm raising the matter, let me use myself as counter example with neither true nor false modesty. I know very well that I could not endure for one week what Solzhenitsyn endured for years in the Gulag archipelago: but that doesn't alter my belief that he is at present the world's most overrated novelist. The Czech playwright Pavel Kohout is, on the evidence, a heroic man, but, also on the evidence, he is a sententious and laboriously metaphorical writer. Nikolai Erdman's play *The Suicide*, written by and about a Soviet citizen of the 1920s, has lately had a number of US productions and was widely praised. I saw two of the productions and thought the play a two-hour spin-off from one bitter joke, and suspected that the critics might have been weighing in Erdman's grim fate.

At least one contemporary writer from Eastern Europe seems to me established in the highest rank: the Hungarian novelist, George Konrád, whose novels *The Case Worker* and *The City Builder* place him with the utterly dissimilar Peter Handke among the best living artists. But the immensely gifted Milan Kundera is apparently to be forgiven his flecks of cuteness by critics who might have slated them in Western writers, because he comes from brutalized Czechoslovakia and is writing about the brutality.

Even Western writers who attack Soviet tyranny benefit critically from their opposition. Look at the praise heaped on Tom Stoppard's commonplace TV play *Professional Foul* and on his atrocious theater piece *Every Good Boy Deserves Favor*—performed with a full symphony orchestra—because they are both against oppression of Czechs. (And everyone knows that Stoppard is Czech-born, so it's especially touching that he hates injustice there, isn't it?)

Inevitably, when this matter of critical moral terrorism is raised, so is the question: shouldn't judgment take into account the sufferings of these artists, the risks they have undergone and may still be undergoing? My answer: no. I, who tremble when a US customs inspector goes through my luggage, would maintain that we insult part of what those men and women are suffering *for* if we overpraise their work because they have suffered to produce it. This seems to me very far from a small or smug or overly neat point.

Now here's a film from Poland, *Man of Marble*, made in 1977 by Andrzej Wajda and already celebrated. It's about repression and subversion of thought in the Stalinist days of the early 1950s. Add to our feelings on this subject the fact that part of the picture takes place in Gdansk, scene of the 1970 revolt; add further what happened in Gdansk and elsewhere in 1980, what is hanging in balance at this very moment, and the picture acquires, without slyness or manipulation, something of the ambiance of a sacred object. But every painting of the Madonna is not a good painting, and *Man of Marble* is a mediocre, overlong, confused film.

First, as I've said before about Wajda (*TNR*, November 3, 1979), he is a windy film rhetorician, mannered and pretentious. The central character of *Man of Marble* is a young woman working on her diploma film for a film-school degree, and at one point her supervisor says to her, "Shoot it straight. Nothing arty." This after about 80 minutes—half the film—of Wajda's own artiness: floor shots upward past crossed legs, handheld intrusions, distorting pans.

Second, the performance of the filmmaker by Krystyna Janda is a gallery of muggings and posings.

Third, deeper and more delicate, this is one more film from a communist country about how tough things once were—under Stalinist regimes. *Angi Vera*, the very much better Hungarian film, used the same device. Either as an oblique way to comment on the harried present or as a way of boasting that things have improved, the device is questionable. But it was sufficient to slide *Man of Marble* past the Polish censors—for the most part, anyway. Bits of the film, including the finish, are nebulous. This isn't Wajda's fault; censors scissored.

Janda, in the 1970s, is making a documentary about a Stakhanovite bricklayer of the 1950s who set a production record, was hailed, was even commemorated in a statue—and then was suddenly dethroned. Janda wants to find out why, and her search, through interviews with survivors, takes us through

Films Worth Seeing

From the Life of the Marionettes. Ingmar Bergman is still asking (this time in German) great questions in an intensely subjective way. Not his best work, but done by a genius.

Kagemusha. Another work of a genius, though not his best. Akira Kurosawa freshens the word "epic" with this story of 16th-century Japanese war lords.

Raging Bull. Robert De Niro as a boxer, directed by Martin Scorsese. They transcend the materials to create an exaltation of fury.

Tess. Not Hardy's texture or tragedy, not a satisfactory cast, but Roman Polanski's direction is his most discreet and subtle since *Knife in the Water*.

SK

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a story convoluted with police-political paranoia. The bricklayer began with genuine revolutionary fervor; he ended as a character out of Koestler. Janda is prevented from finishing her film, although there's an ambiguous hint at the end that she may eventually continue. Wajda, too, was prevented from showing his whole film, and there's no hint that we'll ever see it. But what we can see of it confirms that he is no more sharp and discriminating than ever. By the time this review reaches print, tensions in and about Poland may explode. The least important truth about that possible horror is that it won't improve Wajda's film or talents.

When *L'Assommoir* was published in 1877, the author inscribed one presentation copy:

> To my great friend
> Gustave Flaubert
> in hatred of taste
> Emile Zola

Were Flaubert and Zola the first bad-taste buffs? In any case, for a century we have had a lesser string of parlor radicals whose idea of revolt is to admire what would shock Mrs. Grundy. Every time I see someone smoking in the subway under a No Smoking sign, I think of Lenny Bruce.

First Family is, in an embarrassing way, an apposite film to discuss after *Man of Marble*. It's the US idea of political satire—sex and intimacy jokes about a president, wallowing into bad taste just to prove its bona fides. Johnny Carson has gags about Jimmy Carter's hemorrhoids: Buck Henry, in the script of *First Family*, gives his president a wife who is a lush and a 28-year-old virgin daughter avid for defloration, and makes the president himself a sort of small-town lodge chairman prone to gaffes. The political content of this political satire is nil: but lots of adolescents from 14 to 80 may feel they have struck a blow for something or other by laughing at it.

The lines about homosexuals are in bad taste. The jokes about the daughter, especially about her copulation with the giant and insistently complete sculpture of a nude male, may try the temper of even confirmed bad-taste buffs. The jokes about an African delegation visiting Washington don't even get into the bad-taste category; they belong back in the days of comedies that had black men in them who saw ghosts, then were shown with their faces powdered white.

Henry directed his own script with a hand as light as his wit. Even the sequences that might have had some bargain-basement laughs, like a banquet scene where the president drinks an odd concoction, smother in the lugubrious pace of the dialogue and the funereal camera movement. Bob Newhart, Madeline Kahn, and Gilda Radner are the White House family and struggle against the script and direction. Radner finishes last.

Michael Ullman on jazz

A History of Ragtime

A zestful, syncopated music that borrowed its structure and harmony from the march, ragtime swept the country around the turn of the century. Scott Joplin's "Maple Leaf Rag"—the form's greatest hit—was published in 1899, and it helped to create a boom in ragtime publications that lasted into the second decade of this century when, according to Edward Berlin in *Ragtime: A Musical and Cultural History* (University of California Press; $16.95), "jazz, in its broadest and most inclusive sense, replaced ragtime as the most prominent American popular music." Ragtime has never quite died, but it has had to be resuscitated frequently. In the 1940s traditionalist jazz bands revived ragtime compositions; Berlin notes the importance of Lu Watters's Yerba Buena Jass Band, but surely others contributed to the public's wider awareness of ragtime. The ragtime revival of the 1970s was provoked not merely by the labors of musicians such as Joshua Rifkin, Gunther Schuller, and Max Morath, who treated ragtime as a classical music with its own performance practices, but by *The Sting*, a movie that incongruously supported a story of the 1930s with music created 20 years before. As a result, many people associate ragtime with charmingly zoot-suited gangsters and elegant big city saloons.

Despite its seeming innocence—no music provides more consistently lighthearted fun—ragtime has been controversial as well as misunderstood. Edward Berlin begins his comprehensive book with a section on "Perceptions of the Music," discussing both our too limited understanding of the music's background and its rocky reception from its contemporaries. In 1900 a timorous critic attacked ragtime by noting that "Louis Blumenberg, the 'cello-virtuoso, reports to us that ragtime—a rag-weed of music—has grown up everywhere in the Union and that its vicious influences are highly detrimental to the cause of good music." A commentator less witty and less grammatical than the celebrated Blumenberg merely asked us to "purge America and the Divine Art of Music from this polluting nuisance." Surprisingly, the *Negro Music Journal* in 1902 decried the white men who "perpetuate so-called music under the name 'ragtime,' representing it to be characteristic of Negro music," calling this attribution a "libelous insult."

The respectable editors of the *Negro Music Journal* needn't have worried. As Berlin tells us, with the huge success of ragtime came an attempt to underplay its black origins. *Ragtime: A Musical and Cultural History* reproduces the cover art of rags published from 1900 to 1912: blacks are insulted in the earlier and ignored in the later publications. "A Tennessee Tantalizer" of 1900 shows blacks of various ages tempted by a collection of watermelons; "Aunt Minerva Ann: A Dusky Belle" of 1903 pictures a lusty, cakewalking black woman. "Peaches and Cream" of 1905, on the other hand, is a tribute to the pale flesh of the demure heroine on its cover, while the 1912 "Encore Rag" catches a Caucasian pianist in white tie and tails as he turns from a sparkling concert grand to acknowledge the applause of an elegant audience in a fashionable salon.

Berlin tells us:

> Public acceptance of ragtime, as shown by the enormous increase in commercial publications in 1899, was coupled with the gradual absorption of its name and style into the mainstream of American popular music. Ragtime as an exoticism, as a quaint music from the fringes of society, was replaced by ragtime the white popular music.

The public accepted but adapted rag-

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time, giving it historical significance while softening its outline. Considered the quintessential ragtime song, Irving Berlin's 1911 composition, "Alexander's Ragtime Band," had little of the syncopation that marked the ragtime style. Publishers often simplified rags to bring them within the range of the average pianist, and they also suppressed racially offensive lyrics, not to appease blacks but to expand the market for the music by concealing its origins.

The historical research that yielded this information was not part of Edward Berlin's original conception. Intending a study of piano rags—Berlin inspected over 1,000—the author was startled to find that critics of the ragtime era had a radically different conception of the music than do current scholars. Whereas today ragtime conjures up a wholly notated piano music, to Scott Joplin's contemporaries it was often a vocal music, or even a rhythmic style that one could use to "rag" the classics, as Eubie Blake did with music from *Tannhäuser*. Berlin investigates—some might say pedantically—the origins of the style. Not all of his conclusions are equally edifying. An intricate argument about the difference between jazz and ragtime concludes that the question "seems to be reducible to a matter of semantics." Searching for the origins of the music's name, Berlin summarizes: "Overwhelmingly, the evidence points to the simplest and most direct explanations: the ragged quality of the syncopated rhythm." More perplexing is the statement on page two that

> Vocal and piano ragtime are, for the most part, two different kinds of music: the former belongs in the realm of popular song, while the latter is a unique body of instrumental music which by virtue of its rhythmic impulse and historical influence is most properly considered within the sphere of instrumental jazz.

What is left that should be considered ragtime?

While the section on the origins and early history of ragtime will be most attractive to the casual reader, the heart of the book is its analysis of piano ragtime, an analysis filled with musical examples but accessible to a reader minimally trained in music. In this section, Berlin analyzes statistically and historically his collection of rags, noting the development of the style—mature ragtime was characterized by its tied syncopation—and documenting precisely the decline of ragtime as an independent genre. Of the music's form, for instance, he writes that "ragtime composition is almost invariably constructed according to an additive process in which several complete, independent 16-measure sections . . . are joined without transitional connection." It "inherits its design from earlier dance music, most notably the march." While I have difficulty perceiving a march as a dance, I am consistently impressed with Berlin's clear descriptions and the independence of his perspective. Without rancor or antagonism, he undercuts earlier writers' conceptions, as of the link between ragtime and folk music.

Berlin ultimately is not a critic. I was not surprised to learn how "atypical are the works of Joplin and his circle," and that "the truly 'typical' rag was a highly stereotyped, mediocre product," but shouldn't the author have talked about what distinguishes the best rags? It is little consolation to be able to identify the normal when we value what is distinctive.

Berlin is neither a deft nor a graceful writer; he bumps along from well-defined topic to well-defined topic in a style appropriate to a textbook. But *Ragtime: A Musical and Cultural History* is more than text. Controversial in some ways, *Ragtime* is meant to establish "a background for the evaluation of specific musical gestures." Others will approach ragtime critically as well as analytically, and it is hoped that Berlin's successors will study performance practices as well as printed music. Because Berlin provides this "background for evaluation" in an authoritative way, he has made a significant contribution to the history of American music.

Refining the Public Spirit

Explaining America: The Federalist
by Garry Wills

(Doubleday; $14.95)

Garry Wills has done it again. In *Inventing America* he offered a novel interpretation of the Declaration of Independence, an interpretation that has provoked a storm of academic controversy but one that challenges any reader to see things in the document that scarcely anyone had noticed before, things that his critics say are not there. (I think they are.) In *Explaining America* Wills has attempted an almost equally revisionary reading of the 85 *Federalist Papers*, written in 1787 and 1788 by James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and (in a minor role) John Jay to promote the ratification of the Constitution. He focuses particularly on Madison's famous 10th *Federalist* and challenges us to see things in that document that may or may not be there. (I think some of them are.)

Wills's key to the *Federalist*, like that which he used to open the Declaration, comes from the Scottish Enlightenment. In the earlier volume his argument centered on the influence of Francis Hutcheson on Thomas Jefferson; in this one it centers on the influence of David Hume on Hamilton and Madison. Each chapter is preceded by a quotation from Hume, and it is Hume's political philosophy that Wills finds hidden in the *Federalist*, overlaid by the ingenious applications of the authors.

This is not an easy book to read. Wills is bent not only on reading the *Federalist* right but on showing how others have read it wrong. In order to understand his argument we have to follow him in a series of contentious conversations with a host of scholars, living and dead, including Charles Beard, Edward Corwin, Willmoore Kendall, James McGregor Burns, Robert Dahl, and Douglass Adair. Wills deals generously with each, at least insofar as he agrees with them. His interpretation is, in fact, an extension of Adair's, and the book is dedicated "to the Memory of Douglass Adair, who saw it first." This is the book that Adair wanted to write, that his friends wanted him to write, but that he never could bring himself to write. If he were alive, he would be the first to stand up and cheer for it.

The others with whom Wills converses would or will be less inclined to cheer. In expostulating with them, Wills gives us liberal extracts from their writ-

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ings, but the book can best be read with their volumes at hand, along with Hume's *Essays*, Max Farrand's *Records of the Federal Convention*, and of course the *Federalist*.

It is worth all that trouble? Yes. The *Federalist Papers* are not only the most influential commentary ever written on the United States Constitution, they are also (and especially the 10th) a starting point for some of the major American political thinking of our own time. If Wills is right—and he is at least partly right—everyone except Adair has been wrong about the *Federalist*, though perhaps not quite so wrong as he makes out. Indeed, if he were wholly right and his predecessors wholly wrong (he does not claim that they were), one might argue that wrong readings of the *Federalist* have been the only significant readings, the only readings through which it has had an influence (its influence in securing adoption of the Constitution was not large). But right or wrong, Wills has an extraordinary gift for seeing and suggesting new meanings in familiar passages.

Wills's central argument begins with a demonstration that Madison and Hamilton had a higher view of human nature and a greater confidence in the possibility of good government than other readers of the *Federalist* have found there. In pleading for adoption of the Constitution, he maintains, the authors were contending that it would furnish an opportunity to place government in the hands of disinterested men, men devoted to the public and not to their private interests, men like George Washington. Publius (the appropriate pseudonym over which the *Federalist* first appeared) believed that there were such men in the United States. Indeed their presence was the distinguishing mark of a republic. The problem of republican government was to get them into office and to prevent factious combinations of private interests from overpowering them.

During the 18th century it had become a commonplace, fostered by a reading of Montesquieu, that a republic extended over a large territory would degenerate. David Hume, on the other hand, had argued that large republics, though more difficult to establish (because a conquering republican hero was likely to turn into a king), had a better chance of enduring than small republics did. There were two reasons: first, because the distances made it more difficult for factions to form in a large territory, and second, because the larger population would contain a larger number of public-spirited individuals, who might be brought to the top through a pyramidal succession of elections, beginning at the parish level. Let 100 parishes make a county, to be governed by an assembly of representatives from each parish. The county assemblies would choose a national Senate and the Senate in turn would choose an executive to preside over the whole republic. In such a large republic there would be "room enough to refine the democracy, from the lower people, who may be admitted into the first elections, or first concoction of the commonwealth, to the higher magistrates, who direct all the movements" ("Idea of a Perfect Commonwealth," in *Essays Moral, Political, and Literary*).

As Wills (following Adair) tells it, Madison saw in this scheme of Hume's a pattern that could be adapted to the United States, already blessed with a conquering hero who declined to become a king and already organized into county, town, and state governments, from which in successive "concoctions" a true national republican government could be built. Madison set down his views about large republics in several letters and papers before the meeting of the federal convention (at which he was the principal architect of the Constitution), and he gave them classic expression in the 10th *Federalist*. That paper, often seen as a creed for pluralists, rejoices in the multitude of factions to be found in a large republic, because the very multitude of them, combined with their separation from each other over large distances, will make it difficult to put together combinations that can dominate the whole.

By faction Madison, like other 18th-century thinkers, meant any group assembled for the promotion of its own private interests at the expense of the public. Factions were part of the price paid for the liberty that went with republican government. What Madison (and Hume) sought, and found in a republic of large size, was a way, not to prevent factions, but to frustrate them. It was not a question of letting them fight it out until the biggest or best won. What Madison and Hume both wanted, as Wills sees it, was a deadlock of all private interests to make way for public virtue: "If a multiplicity and interplay of interests is encouraged, it is to

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block them all; so that, above their self-defeating squabble, the true interest of the entire body of the people may shine clear by contrast, for pursuit by virtuous men."

Other modern interpreters have recognized that the process described in the 10th *Federalist* would lead to deadlock and have criticized Madison for proposing a helpless government. Where Wills differs is in reading Madison's argument more positively. The paralyzing contest of factions is only the prelude to what he sees as the main point of the paper, a refining system for representative government, in which men of high public character are separated out from their less pure countrymen by a succession of elections to the higher branches and offices of government:

> For Madison, the thing to be refined is virtue. It is present in the people, who are admitted to the first concoction; otherwise their genius would not be republican. But it is in an impure state there, mingled with private interest and local bias. Through several concoctions, the interest is purged, the distilled product rendered. That product is *dis*interest; *im*partiality; candor; clarity (through 'liquidation'); virtue.

Wills insists on the word "concoctions" (rather than "elections") because in the language of the 18th century it carried the meaning (in which Hume employed it) of ripening, maturing, or bringing to perfection through a series of stages. He shows us that Hume's countryman James Wilson used it at the Constitutional Convention to apply to elections in the same way that Hume did. Wills does not show us that Madison used it, but Wilson and Madison usually were allies at the Convention. Accordingly, when Wills finds Madison saying that representative government can "refine and enlarge the public views," he sees the message of Hume in the voice of Madison. Madison, he is convinced, had chosen a "marvellously apt" image for politics from the process by which distilled spirits are refined from concoction to concoction. And he offers a digression on contemporary chemistry to convince us that

> the same process that refines public views also enlarges them, frees them from captivity to local interest or narrow aims. The higher spirits of governance in the digestive body politic are like the freed fumes of an enriched brandy.

What Publius wanted was enlarged views, public spirit, and these would pervade the government through "the concoction method of elections that Madison proposes in No. 10."

Wills's view is challenging. It clashes directly with recent interpretations of Madison and Hamilton as spokesmen for the politics of private interest. Where the argument falters is in the emphasis on "the concoction method of elections" as the means by which Madison hoped to elicit public virtue in a large republic.

Since Publius was arguing for the adoption of the federal Constitution, we may presume that the concoction method referred to is the one embodied in the Constitution, whereby the House of Representatives alone was to be elected directly by popular vote; the Senate was to be elected by the state legislatures, the president by an electoral college, and other officers were to be appointed by the president with the consent of the Senate. Of course, Publius does defend virtually every clause of the Constitution at one point or another, but it is not from Publius and particularly not from number 10 that we can learn to see the prescribed mode of elections as a fulfillment of Hume's scheme of successive elections. Number 10 says not a word about this or any other mode of elections. It speaks of elections at all only to advocate those with a large number of electors as against those with a small number, and the word "concoction" does not appear in it or, for that matter, anywhere else in the *Federalist*.

One must go to other statements of Madison, outside the *Federalist*, to find him advocating anything that can be interpreted as Hume's scheme. And even then the interpretation requires some straining. The most effective piece of evidence Wills offers us is a speech early in the Constitutional Convention (May 31, 1787) in which, as a preface to a plea for direct popular election of the House of Representatives, Madison acknowledged that

> He was an advocate for the policy of refining the popular appointments by successive filtrations, but thought it might be pushed too far. He wished the expedient to be resorted to only in the appointment of the second branch of the Legislature, and in the Executive and judiciary branches of the Government (Farrand, *Records*, I, 50).

This seems clear enough, and it is supported by the fact that Madison's own "Virginia Plan" for the Constitution proposed to have the House of Representatives choose the Senate and the Senate and House together choose the president. But the Convention rejected those proposals, and Madison did not press them. When Wills asks us to make use of what Madison said at the Convention and earlier as a way to read into number 10 a defense of "successive filtrations" or a proposal for "the concoction method of elections," it is fair for us to ask what sort of elections Madison actually did advocate at the Convention and earlier.

The most insistent theme in Madison's letters and papers in the year before the Convention met, as his editors have pointed out, was his distrust of the state legislatures, which he thought were destroying the reputation and future prospects of republican government by passing laws that threatened the security of property. At the Convention he fought every move that would make the national government in any way dependent on the states. He was accordingly very much against the final provision that placed the election

A TOMB AT TARQUINIA

The two of us, on the living-room couch,
An Etruscan couple,
Blindeyed to the new light let suddenly in;
Sitting among the things that belong to us,
The style of living familiar, and easy,
Nothing yet utterly lost.

Leapers and dolphins adorn the painted walls;
The sun is rising,
Or setting, over a blue Tyrrhenian Sea;
In the pictured cup the wine brims and glistens;
An unknown flower burns with odorless incense
The still air of the place.

David Ferry

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of the Senate in their hands. Other members shared Madison's feeling about the corruption of the state legislatures. Elbridge Gerry of Massachusetts denounced the legislature of his own state as filled with "men of indigence, ignorance and baseness." Everyone wanted some check to keep those kinds of men out of the national legislature. But Gerry and a majority of the Convention nevertheless favored giving to the state legislatures the election of the national Senate. When Gerry defended the proposal as a "refinement," in a speech that Wills cites as illustrative of Madison's own preference, Madison answered him in a speech that Wills seems not to have noticed: "Nothing can be more contradictory than to say that the National Legislature without a proper check will follow the State Legislatures, and in the same breath, that the State Legislatures are the only proper check." And though Madison originally had proposed that the national House of Representatives choose the Senate, he now favored "an election by the people or thro' any other channel than the State Legislatures." So, incidentally, did James Wilson. But Madison and Wilson lost.

At the Convention Madison was less unhappy about the mode finally adopted for electing the president by an electoral college, but he did not like it (neither did Wilson). Several methods had been proposed: election by Congress (which he himself had first proposed), by the state governors, by the state legislatures, by an electoral college. On July 25, when the Convention had been debating for two months, Madison considered and rejected all of these in a speech of some length and went on: "The remaining mode was an election by the people or rather by the freeholders at large. With all its imperfections he liked this best." (Madison later in his notes crossed out "freeholders" and substituted "qualified part of them," i.e. qualified part of the people. In Virginia the freeholders were the qualified part.) These are not the words of a man enamored of a series of "concoctions" or "successive filtrations" as the essential element in attaining a government by men of public virtue.

It is true that Madison wanted a strong executive (the product of the final refinement in Hume's scheme and a stage removed from popular vote in the Constitution as adopted), and he thought some check was needed to prevent the people's representatives from overpowering him. But Madison was not quite as fearful of the popularly elected legislature as Wills would have us believe. Wills tells us that

> Madison had argued long and hard at the Convention for an absolute veto [of the president] on the Congress, not a relative veto with provisions for an override. This was far more important to him than the veto on state legislatures, since the federal legislature would be far more powerful.

Well, it is just not so. In the Virginia Plan Madison proposed a "council of revision," composed of the president and "a convenient number of the National Judiciary," to have a veto power that could be overridden by a simple majority. When his friends Wilson and Hamilton moved to give the executive an absolute veto, Madison spoke against them. On the other hand, he did argue long, hard, and often for giving the national government an absolute veto over the acts of the state legislatures.

It will be unfortunate if Wills's occasional lapse and his insistence on reading a "concoction method of elections" into the *Federalist* discredits what is really the main thrust of his book, namely that the *Federalist*'s vision of the national government is not so much that of an umpire directing compromises among a multitude of conflicting private interests as that of a government in which public spirit can rise above private interest. Wills's case for reading the *Federalist* this way is a strong one. And his case for the influence of Hume is equally strong. Madison and Hamilton both learned much from Hume, and perhaps under ideal circumstances Madison would have favored Hume's succession of elections as a way to achieve his goal. But that is not what he argued for in the *Federalist*. In 1787 and 1788 Madison still saw the state legislatures as the major threat to the future of republican government, and he placed his hope of overcoming them on a direct appeal to the people. Throughout the Convention he and his allies fought to make each branch of government as independent of the states as possible by resting each branch directly on the people and by having the whole Constitution ratified through popular conventions and not by the state legislatures.

It was not the method of electing the national government that mattered so much, as long as it remained independent of the states. What Madison counted

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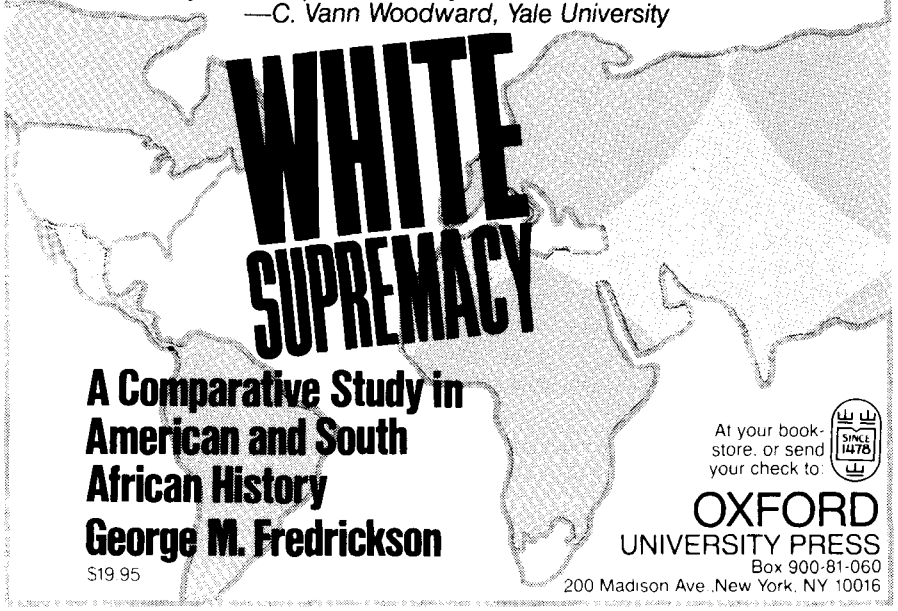

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on to refine public virtue out of the mass, before 1791 at least, was not successive elections but the ratio of representation that a national republic made possible. A large republic with a small legislature would achieve the refinement sought (the first national House of Representatives in 1789 was smaller than most of the state legislatures). Corruption and intrigue, he believed, were the product of small electoral units, a proposition that was echoed again and again by other supporters of the Constitution. Simply enlarging the units to a ratio of no less than 30,000 to one, as the Constitution required, would confine the voters to a choice among men of reputation. It would eliminate the local pressures and locally oriented candidates that had made the state governments a disgrace. This is what number 10 is about.

Wills, in short, is mostly right, and his infatuation with "concoctions" is a red herring which his enthusiasm for Hume has cast in his way. What he shows us convincingly and with excitement is that Madison and Hamilton, like the leaders of the revolution who preceded them, believed it was possible to keep government out of the hands of the small-minded, and that the government provided for by the United States Constitution could do it. To read the *Federalist* afresh, as Wills has done and helps us to do, is to have hope renewed in that possibility—and at a time when hope has been hard to come by. Two cheers!

Edmund S. Morgan

Edmund S. Morgan is Sterling Professor of History at Yale University and author of *The Challenge of the American Revolution* (Norton).

Muddling Through

British Government and Its Discontents by Geoffrey Smith and Nelson W. Polsby

(Basic Books; $12.95)

The obituary column of the *Times* of London always speaks in the authentic upstairs tones of the British establishment. But that august paper tends to excel itself on the death of what it likes to call "a socially significant performer of the popular music of his day." I well remember Elvis Presley being sniffed off to eternity as "a totally uninteresting person."

John Lennon was accorded a rather warmer farewell last month, his 45 posthumous inches rivaling the space accorded many a senior civil servant or retired Army officer. Well, he was British born (even if he chose exile in Babylon), and he did do a lot for exports. I had not previously realized, however, that his elevation by Her Majesty in 1966 to Membership of the Order of the British Empire "echoed a general feeling that the Beatles had been at the spearhead of the formation of a new role for Britain in the world."

So it was John who finally exorcised Suez, Paul who helped us over devaluation, George who blew raspberries back at de Gaulle, Ringo who symbolized Harold Wilson's white-hot technological revolution! The Fab Four were our consolation for loss of empire. And all these years I'd thought they were just paying off the national debt.

The *Times* obituarist, his pen dipped in the same concrete, could well have been ghosting a chapter of this, his colleague Geoffrey Smith's book. In the 1960s, apparently, the Beatles

> appeared to advertise abroad an English way of life—dynamic, creative, progressive, forward-looking—that was pleasantly at odds with the received image of a country suffering economic, political and foreign policy problems, with only a past to find pleasure in.

So say Smith and Polsby. They don't mention "the greatest songwriters since Schubert" (the *Times* again) or even Carnaby Street by name, but there does seem to be a lofty consensus that the swinging 1960s were Britain's finest postwar hours.

It is no wonder American Anglophiles grow confused. One minute we're a nation of sex-crazed cabinet ministers, pricing defense secrets at our mistress's eyebrow, the next we're a lovable, mop-haired bunch of cockeyed optimists. To make matters worse, Americans were told in 1977 by R. Emmett Tyrrell Jr. (and others) of *The Future That Doesn't Work: Social Democracy's Failure in Britain*. The following year Bernard Nossiter, then the *Washington Post*'s London correspondent, hit back with *Britain: A Future That Works*, arguing that it is the mark of a mature and civilized society to prefer leisure to toil. Now along come Smith and Polsby, the latter also an American, to tell us that the present may seem a bit grim, but they too have seen the future—and it works. Maybe.

That is not a widely held view, even in official British circles. Our present ambassador here and his immediate predecessor were both unlucky enough to be caught issuing prophecies of doom, just before receiving their unexpected assignments to Massachusetts Avenue. In an Institute of Economic Affairs lecture in 1976, when still a mere journalist, Peter Jay argued that Britain's four contemporary objectives are fundamentally incompatible, namely: full employment, stable prices, free collective bargaining, and a parliamentary system of democratic government. His proposition was applied to all modern democracies, but above all to Britain because of the unparalleled political strength of its trade unions. And in what he thought his farewell dispatch, on his retirement as ambassador to France in March 1979, Sir Nicholas Henderson wrote:

> Income per head in Britain is now, for the first time in over 300 years, below that in France. We are scarcely in the same economic league as the Germans or French. We talk of ourselves without shame as being one of the less prosperous countries of Europe. The prognosis for the foreseeable future is discouraging. If present trends continue, we shall be overtaken in GDP per head by Italy and Spain well before the end of the century.

Now, less than two years later, even the *Times* itself is up for sale (the *Observer* already being, greatly to its benefit, American-owned). With the Dorchester Hotel in Arab hands, what else can befall? How long before Buckingham Palace follows the Queen Mary and London Bridge, brick by brick, across the Atlantic? This year, it seems likely, will tell. In 1981 it will be make-or-break for Mrs. Thatcher, who must, in her own tired words, "turn the econ-

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omy around" by mid-1982 to stand a chance of reelection in 1984. The omens are not good.

Europe's Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development predicts a much worse future for Britain than for its European co-Marketeers, thus nailing any political evasions about inexorable world market forces, etc. By mid-1982, said the OECD last month, unemployment in the United Kingdom will have reached three million (12 percent of the work force), the worst since the 1930s. That alone could spell Mrs. Thatcher's doom. But there is worse.

Despite the blessings of North Sea oil, predicts OECD, Britain will be the Western country worst hit by recession over the next 18 months. The balance of payments deficit will continue to deteriorate; there will be further reductions in industrial output, investment, and international competitiveness. The gross domestic product will shrink by two percent, just as Sir Nicholas Henderson predicted.

The immediate causes of this dismal decline should be of great interest to the new Reagan administration. Mrs. Thatcher's election promises in 1978-79 were very similar to those of the Republican candidate in 1979-80: reduce government spending, eliminate waste, cut back the bureaucracy, tighten control of the money supply. For all Thatcher's patient sincerity in applying what she thought appropriate, if painful, remedies, none of them has worked.

Mrs. Thatcher's few American critics—be they supply-siders, Laffer curvers, welfare-cutters, or the purest of pure monetarists—offer different explanations of what has gone wrong. The great guru Milton Friedman himself has been in and out of Downing Street, offering to run the Bank of England as he would the Federal Reserve, but monetarism plainly has failed as yet to find an exit from Peter Jay's cul-de-sac. Reagan, Regan, Stockman, and others should note that the application of strict monetary controls in a society with wage-push inflation (and without a free market in labor) just deepens recession.

Mrs. Thatcher has cut back to 12 percent the 22 percent inflation rate she created—a year before her election, it was in single digits—but only by offering sugar lumps rather than jobs to the despairing, and still growing, unemployed. She now has been reduced to calling home an expatriate British economist, Dr. Alan Walters of Johns Hopkins and the World Bank, to apply his even more stringent brand of fiscal conservatism for a salary exactly twice her own.

Economics may dominate the state of a nation's morale (as I believe it dominated the thoughts of American voters last November). But in Britain's case there are historical reasons for its shrinkage from a colossus bestriding the world to an embryonic banana republic with a monarchy but no bananas. The authors construct their book around such symptoms of the British malaise as declining productivity, regional in-fighting, a shrinking role on the world stage, and the need for reform of the major political and social institutions. They profess themselves optimists, but offer no specific solutions, concluding rather vaguely (and in a direct echo of the *Times* obituarist): "The question for Britain is whether it will recover its readiness to hope and to renew constructive endeavour, or whether the pride that it retains will come only from contemplation of the past."

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Two reasons Counselor to the President Ed Meese says,
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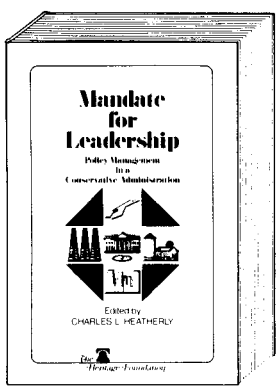

When advance copies of this book were delivered to President-elect Reagan's transition office the week after the election, everyone started talking. This "extraordinarily detailed guideline for the Reagan team" (New York Times) contains, "not vague theorizing, but chapter and verse specifics, the nitty gritty of the Right way to govern" (Dallas Morning News). This "blueprint for grabbing the government by its frayed New Deal lapels and shaking out 48 years of liberal policies" (United Press International) is "unprecedented in its scope and depth" (new budget director David Stockman). Outgoing Senator Birch Bayh calls it "most disturbing," while incoming Counselor to the President Edwin Meese finds it "very impressive."

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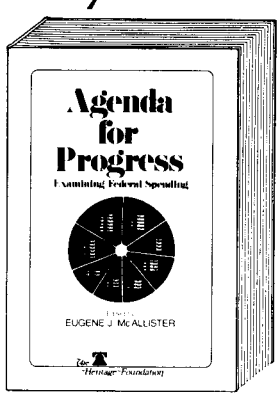

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quidation of the British Empire." But that, of course, is precisely what he did. The process was already irreversible, and altogether healthy. The remark is a direct historical precursor of Dean Acheson's equally famous statement, 20 years later, that Britain had "lost an empire and not yet found a role."

It was, as the authors say, in looking to Europe in the early 1960s that Britain sought to find that role. Suez had put a disastrous lid on the era of empire, proving that even the United States thought such British belligerence mere *folie de grandeur*. No longer invited to superpower summits—our presence at Yalta and Potsdam had been much more a reflection of Britain's war record than of our economic or military might—we now were spurned even by the Common Market. De Gaulle understandably thought Britain's entry would render Europe a mere adjunct to the US. And even as the "special relationship" was providing our European undoing, the US itself went all coy. Britain without Europe was too weak a partner to share a bilateral Atlantic alliance. "Britain was forced to conclude," as Smith and Polsby put it in their swift historical résumé, "that the United States was prepared to live in a commune with her, but not to marry her."

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Coming:

Virginia Woolf in her Letters.

Britain has been a member of the European Economic Community for eight of the past 20 years and a decidedly mixed blessing it has proved. Mrs. Thatcher heroically renegotiated our budgetary contribution, but it is still far too high to make economic sense. Our productive farmers are properly resentful of subsidizing their less efficient French counterparts. Continued trade with the Commonwealth would have left such staples as meat and dairy products much less expensive. Surplus butter is sold off cheap to the Russians while many Britons can afford only margarine (a pure example of Marie Antoinette economics). If another referendum were held today, Britons, for all their love of the status quo, would vote overwhelmingly for withdrawal from Europe. In the last six months withdrawal has become official policy of the opposition Labour party, which has elected as its leader a lifelong anti-Marketeer. Both party and leader, it should be noted, also favor unilateral disarmament, which would inevitably mean withdrawal from NATO. This despite the fact that Britain's role as a world power depends on its membership in Europe (quite apart from NATO). The Common Market was founded as a specifically economic entity, but it is inevitably metamorphosing into a homogeneous political unit—each separate democracy now has surrendered sovereignty on many issues to a European parliament in Strasbourg—which is gingerly beginning to proffer its own communal foreign policy.

THUS President Kennedy's vision of the Atlantic alliance, with Europe a united bulwark against the Soviet advance westward, and Britain's expertise supplying Europe a global view, has not quite come to pass. Unless the French vote out of character next month, the Schmidt-Giscard axis will dominate European thinking for the foreseeable future, with Britain's role limited by its economic weakness. And Mrs. Thatcher, having scored, thanks to the skilled diplomacy of Lord Carrington, a remarkable success in Rhodesia, now seems to be turning her attention to her other unique "external" problem, Northern Ireland.

As Britain goes deeper into recession, Mrs. Thatcher also will be unable to meet NATO's commitment to a three percent real increase in defense spending, however much she may want to, and whatever skillful fudging of the figures she may use to disguise the truth. The prime minister will have some explaining to do when she meets President Reagan, and NATO's favorite son, Secretary Haig, in Washington on February 25.

BRITAIN'S unique problems, even within Europe, stem from historical causes rarely mentioned in current debate. All blame is placed on the "suicidal" greediness of trade unions, yet the authors shrewdly suggest that it is more the constant *threats* of strikes than strikes themselves which have so bruised British industry. The British strike record, as they point out, is no worse than in many other countries; in terms of working days lost, it is in fact better than that of the United States. Little is heard of the strains imposed on the "United" Kingdom by regional interests, notably those of Scotland and Wales, yet it was a vote on devolution that brought down the Callaghan government.

Britons are much prouder of their regional identity than Americans, and thus less mobile in their pursuit of happiness. This in turn means, as a rule, that economic hardship is the price of social stability. By contrast, the black immigrant community, now numbering about one million, is much less integrated and thus more restive. Whereas black Americans have lived in the US since before the adoption of the Constitution, nearly all black Britons have arrived only since the war.

Members of the British parliament, moreover, are much less subject to pressures from their home base than are members of the US Congress. The obligation to vote the party line, at the peril of losing political advancement, leaves their constituents even more cynical about Westminster than the middle American voter is about Washington. British parliamentary democracy, to put it bluntly, reflects—and is in large part responsible for—the country's state of decay. A system perfected by a nation at the height of its powers ill serves that same nation now it is all but on its knees.

Smith and Polsby devote the major—and most original—section of their book to an analysis of British political institutions, suggesting that they may be "less unchangeable" than is generally acknowledged. They rightly conclude that the system, described by the lord chancellor, Lord Hailsham, as "an elec-

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tive dictatorship," is in dire need of reform. Parliament, as they argue, is powerless to guide or scrutinize the policies of government. A half-baked version of the US committee system now is being tried out, but Mrs. Thatcher's parliamentary majority affords her despotic powers. The electorate, both sides of industry, and half the cabinet—once known as pragmatists, now dubbed "wets"—may have deserted her, but not until her backbenchers flex what pass for their muscles will she fall.

Parliament's growing ineffectiveness is compounded by the power of the civil service, a self-appointing, self-perpetuating secret society that ensures more continuity of policy than either the electorate or successive governments have in mind. Americans would be horrified by the examples quoted in this book of senior civil servants withholding from their ministers information that would rock the boat, or conspiring together to outflank their political "masters." The power and unaccountability of the civil service has ensured, since the war, that there has been a broader consensus, a greater continuity, than might be expected of a series of governments elected on drastically differing mandates.

It was not his rudeness about Edward Heath or his evident crush on Mrs. Thatcher that drew gasps from an American Enterprise Institute lunch addressed by Dr. Walters, the new economic czar, shortly before he left Washington. It was his revelation that his new job made him one of fewer than 10 political appointees in the British government, even as, around the corner, the Reagan transition team was struggling to select several thousand.

EACH OF these important areas merits more extended study than space permits here, or than the authors of this thoughtful book have allowed themselves. The plain fact is that it is difficult to feel optimistic about Britain's future. But it is not enough to pin the rap, as do Smith and Polsby and so many in Britain today, on an ill-defined attitude of defeatism, the notion that a tired old sometime superstar is quietly giving up the unequal struggle.

Perhaps history will see the decline of Britain as the hallmark of a uniquely munificent, even-handed welfare state, funded by cripplingly high personal taxation. A Briton living in the United States may be forgiven a particular outrage at doctors' bills, prescription

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charges, the lack of legal aid, the cost of higher education. This one, at any rate, misses little else about home but his friends' sense of humor, good television, Test cricket, and certain culinary delights. By way of recompense there is fresh adrenalin to be derived each day from the sense that this is a country mature enough to acknowledge its comparative youth, brash and resourceful enough to look to a better future, for all its current problems. I've gotten to be quite a bore at Washington dinner tables, droning on about self-evident truths and last, best hopes.

For Mrs. Thatcher, despite the best intentions, is steadily eroding Britain's major remaining virtue: that it is an extremely pleasant place to live. Americans may still delight in the charms of London—how many venture farther north?—but the natives themselves rarely have had it so bad. Emigration figures never have been higher. Bernard Nossiter may be right that civilization goes hand in hand with increased leisure, but he surely is wrong to expect the British economic desert to bloom as a result. The British traits behind it all have been caught best by—*sic transit gloria*—yet another American, one who chooses to live in the place, Paul Theroux:

> The British do not say 'You're welcome' and they seldom shake hands. What they do best is empty trash, deliver mail and milk at dawn, run schools, provide dental and medical care and eyeglasses for a pittance, broadcast intelligent radio programmes, plant pretty gardens, produce articulate debate, maintain the character of villages and parks, brew real beer, finance a spectacularly good library service, stand politely in line, avoid talking to strangers, and make amateurism and uncompetitiveness the goals of nearly every endeavour. There is no money in this.

Well, quite. The best that can be hoped is that Mrs. Thatcher will not also undermine the one British quality which may yet save the day: an eternal capacity for muddling through.

Anthony Holden

Anthony Holden is the chief American correspondent of the *Observer* of London, and the author of several books, most recently a biography of the Prince of Wales.

Son of 'Making It'

Ambition
by Joseph Epstein

(Dutton; $12.95)

With *Ambition*, Joseph Epstein has taken the bicycle pump out of the garage and blown up an essay-length topic into an air-bloated tome of nearly 300 pages. Epstein, who contributes peppery, against-the-grain essays to the *American Scholar*, *Commentary*, and *Harper's*, enjoys playing the bookish crank, blowing smoke rings in the face of liberal piety. He now has set out to rehabilitate ambition's reputation, which he feels has become tattered and soiled in recent years. Lefties, intellectuals, novelists, Naderish do-gooders, hookah-toking dropouts—all have made ambition seem suspect. Under their influence, ambition no longer is seen as "the fuel of achievement" but as a Nixonian itch, a desire to have one's ruthless way in the world even if it means planting knives into the backs of boyhood chums. This Epstein finds distressing. "[W]hatever its excesses, ambition has at all times been the passion that best releases the energies that make civilization possible."

No quarrel there, and no quarrel with Epstein's concern that Americans are becoming half paralyzed with gloom, lethargy, a lack of belief in the future. But the rest of his argument seems to me as soft and rickety as a termite-ridden rocker. Despite the counterculture's flirtation with Zen, panhandling, and back-to-the-land movements, most Americans never have lost their romance with ambition, whether it's represented by Sylvester Stallone's Rocky slugging slabs of meat or the Corleone family garroting its rivals in *The Godfather*. Indeed, the most fanatically watched television show in the country, "Dallas," is a pop aria to the pleasures of one-upmanship. Yet Epstein insists that not only is ambition under fire but that the posher things in life are now being disdainfully slighted.

> Evidence of hypocrisy is, as usual, not wanting: authors of books deploring affluence who regularly call their editors for up-to-the-minute royalty statements; Marxist professors with two Volvos in the driveways of their summer homes. *Esquire*, whose pages spill over with advertisements for cars, clothes, travel, and other worldly treasures, runs an article on the pleasures of downward mobility.

Hypocrisy is always a fat target, yet Epstein neglects to mention the boom in lush up-scale magazines like *Los Angeles* and Andy Warhol's *Interview*—publications which unashamedly worship leisure and excess. Similarly, Epstein cites actor Richard Dreyfuss as an example of someone whose social conscience (translation: liberal guilt) makes him incapable of savoring his success to the fullest tang. Yet for every brooding Dreyfuss in Hollywood there's a baby pasha like producer Allen Carr, whose life is a well-publicized whirl of screenings, disco parties, and gluttonous dinners.

To be fair, Epstein's quarrel seems less with America's pop culture than with its literature.

> Even in quite serious contemporary American novels, a character drawn as ambitious is not a character to think well of; more likely, he is someone meant to be ridiculed, or taught hard lessons, or brought down with a thump.

Doing a Sherlock Holmes squint into a magnifying glass, Epstein traces this hostility to ambition through the novels of Sinclair Lewis, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Hemingway. For all his squinting, however, he fails to stumble across any trunks stuffed with fresh evidence. His discussion of Sinclair Lewis's career, for example, is such a perfunctory gloss-over that he doesn't seem to have explored the novels on his own but instead relied on the American lit. survey course platitudes handed down like dusty heirlooms from one generation of English professors to the next. Chalk seems to be scratching across the blackboard as the reader confronts such conventional yawners as, "In *Babbitt*, [Lewis] worked over the businessman, stripping back his skin after a thorough flogging to reveal the pretentions, hypocrisy, and pitiful aspirations lying underneath." (Conventional, this, and misleading: *Babbitt* is a far more feeling and skillful novel than Epstein's whip-and-peel imagery would indicate.) A

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few pages later, Epstein trots out an even more tired complaint. "It was not so much that these novelists preached failure but that they impugned success, and thus debunked ambition. They brought down the house but erected nothing in its place." How familiar this is! Once again American writers are being scolded for not being affirmative—for being (to use Babbitt's slang) knockers rather than boosters.

But were American writers really knocking ambition? Epstein neglects to mention the book in which Sinclair Lewis pays full sentimental tribute to vision and perseverance: *Arrowsmith*, his 1925 novel about a doctor who refuses to settle for safe success, but pushes on, on. (Not incidentally, *Arrowsmith* was—and remains—one of Lewis's most popular novels. It even won him a Pulitzer Prize nomination, which he refused.) American writers weren't really attacking ambition or success; they were trying to light a few firecrackers under the seat of that great slumbering oaf, philistinism. To achieve comfortable wealth and then sink complacently into one's fat, proudly ignorant of art or music or ideas—*this* is what aroused the scorn of a Lewis or Mencken.

Confusing contempt for success with contempt for philistinism enables Epstein to offer a few words in defense of Norman Podhoretz's 1967 embarrassment, *Making It*. After acknowledging the book's blemishes, Epstein writes:

> Podhoretz's true sin, it seemed apparent from the reviews, was in saying that it is all right to succeed, there is nothing wrong in enjoying the emoluments that flow from success—nothing to be ashamed of about either of these things.

No, sorry, wrong: Podhoretz had his knuckles rapped not because he told the unfashionable truth but because he had no sense of tone or decorum. As Wilfrid Sheed noted in his review of *Making It* (reprinted in *The Morning After*),

> Ambiguity is totally alien to Podhoretz's book, which has but one gear and one track and rolls down it like a *Daily News* van. For example, the dirty little secret of sex has been unveiled for some time, yet we still frown on people who boast about their sexual prowess as much as we frown on people who boast about their money.

Epstein isn't as vulgar or featherpreeningly vain as Podhoretz, but he too wants us to be up-front about worldly spoils—he could have called his book *Ambition Without Guilt: A Spiritual Guide for the Timid*. But where would all this candor leave us? Sheed, again: "People sitting around discussing their success, even their success at Columbia University, would be as inspiring as executives modeling long johns in the locker room."

Of course, if you stripped ambition of all tenderness and moral qualms the world would be an Ayn Rand urban jungle, with brawny geniuses striding girders and parapets, sneering at the ant-like rabble below. Epstein doesn't want to go quite this far. (He, for example, dissociates himself from the smiling-cobra Machiavellianism of Michael [*Power*] Korda.) Putting away the long johns, he devotes a chapter near the end of *Ambition* to an unpleasant subject: the "great grey bog" of failure. In many ways, it's the most interesting chapter in the book, for failure compels Epstein to turn aside from the onward-and-upward rhetoric and confront the social and psychological damage done to those whose lives are gutted by ambition. As Epstein understands, the most moving and harrowing study of failure was executed by Theodore Dreiser in *Sister Carrie*.

> . . . Having himself started out low in life, having climbed a good way up, thence only to tumble back down, Dreiser knew all the bumps on the chute toward failure, all the splinters and rough places. He knew about the petty pride that resists commonsense action in reversing one's misfortune, the lassitude that drags a man further down, the mounting feelings of impotence that work against him. He knew about these things in large and in fine: about the meaning of an unemployed man's suddenly not shaving daily; about compulsive newspaper reading and seeking out warm places that take one away from looking for work; about how failure in effect desexes a man, slowly twisting him into a repulsively pitiable creature before the woman who once loved him. Dreiser knew about failure, and he knew it was no grand thing, but mean and narrow—and nothing more than misery.

As if afraid to linger on the frayed, careworn, stale-bread side of failure, Epstein swiftly moves on to Adlai Stevenson, for whom failure hovered like a radiant crown, a halo.

With neoconservatism now in the saddle, *Ambition* may find a responsive audience among highbrows, just as Wayne Dyer's I-gotta-be-me books won over the middles. But really, it's a far

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from exciting exercise. In his essays, Epstein can be cantankerous and flip, flicking smart asides off his thumb like rubber bands. Here he's dry, academic, a touch too Trilling-ish. (His "summing up" chapter is a pale echo of Trilling's call to reason at the close of *Sincerity and Authenticity*.) Worse, where the essays tend to be tidy, the book is a padded sprawl. In the first chapter alone, the text is seasoned with quotations from Benjamin Franklin, Stendhal, Michelet, Archibald MacLeish, Walker Percy, Adam Smith, Gertrude Stein, Disraeli, Emile Durkheim, Hazlitt, and (but of course!) Tocqueville; and the rest of the book contains mini-biographies of John D. Rockefeller, the Duponts, the Guggenheims, Mark Twain, Henry Ford, Henry Luce, Edith Wharton, Joseph P. Kennedy, and Wallace Stevens—overdone subjects about whom Epstein has nothing strikingly fresh to add. Reading *Ambition*, one sees poor Epstein trapped in his study, surrounded by mounds of notecards, compulsively sharpening pencils down to the stub as the walls begin to close in. . . . Had Epstein not wanted to make a major statement about the spiritual arthritis of our time, he might have written a succinct essay that could have carried a pugnacious smack. Instead, he's unloaded on us a book that wanders all over the place, aimlessly, repetitiously. Less would have been immeasurably more. Ambition is what does *Ambition* in.

James Wolcott

James Wolcott writes for the *Village Voice* and *Esquire*.

A Tiger by the Tail

Our Energy: Regaining Control
by Marc H. Ross & Robert H. Williams

(McGraw-Hill; $16.95)

The authors, both physicists, sketch an impressive brief for national energy policies focused upon conservation and solar sources and a much less persuasive argument for reliance upon market incentives to accomplish this major shift away from strategies to enlarge fossil fuel supplies, create a synthetic fuel industry, and rehabilitate nuclear power generation. As they tell the story, solar-conservation is preferable to available alternatives partly because of the defects of the alternatives and even more because of the positive advantages of energy from renewable sources and conservation.

In their understated, utterly unadorned expository style, Ross and Williams leave little doubt that the usual indictment against nuclear power is fully proven. The risks of accident, theft by criminals or terrorists, and weapons proliferation are high and hard to eliminate. A concise survey of half a dozen American attempts to solve the waste disposal problem leads our guides to the excessively temperate conclusion that "Given the high stakes involved, society may be making a mistake in moving ahead with nuclear power without a proven solution to the waste-disposal problem." Yes, indeed. Even if these criticisms of nuclear energy were somehow countered, the mounting costs have already all but dried up demand by public utilities for new reactors. Nuclear enthusiasts have been mounting a discreet campaign to simplify the licensing and regulatory process. If successful, reactor costs may decline sufficiently to revive the industry and, of course, increase the probability of accidents more serious than Three Mile Island.

The outlook is less grim for oil, gas, and coal. On assumptions about the market for energy more conservative than those of the electrical utilities, Ross and Williams project by the year 2005 a level of demand for these fuels certain to generate huge increases in their prices. No sensible analysis postulates exhaustion of these conventional sources of energy. The danger is the disappearance of low-cost fuel. Thus the hopes of the more enthusiastic supply-siders in and out of the Reagan administration that Kemp-Roth tax reductions will make gushers leap to the heavens confront the judicious estimate of the National Academy of Sciences that even if growth in oil and gas consumption halts, potentially recoverable supplies will run out in a mere 50 years. They will disappear much more quickly if energy use grows at historical rates.

The alternative non-nuclear fuels—shale, coal, and tar sands—are comparatively plentiful but accompanied by high capital costs and assorted environmental hazards: water shortages for shale and degradation of landscape and air quality for coal. It makes sense, accordingly, to emphasize the ways to create abundant energy that are the cheapest and least threatening to health and environment.

By far the cheapest and most wholesome energy source is conservation. Much of this volume amounts to a home-owner's manual for fuel conservation. Although this message resembles the one in Robert Stobaugh's and Daniel Yergin's *Energy Future* (the latter's enthusiastic blurb adorns the book jacket) Ross and Williams have taken pains to sift numerous studies of home construction and distill from them detailed instructions for the perplexed. As usual, their sensible emphasis is upon the benefits, comforts, and pecuniary gains of conservation rather than the spiritual virtues of turning thermostats down and buttoning up Carter-cardigans. You can keep warm and save on the fuel bills!

They are equally concrete in their prescriptions for cogeneration of heat and power and in their inspection of the technologies that may assemble automobiles capable of running 60 miles on a single gallon of OPEC elixir. Solar energy fits into these scenarios as an ingredient in mixtures of energy technologies which should differ according to climate, commuting patterns, and poulation densities.

Ross's and Williams's public policy recommendations, upon which my reservations center, are shaped by dislike for central planning and strong preference for approaches that make maximum use of private sector markets, encourage small entrepreneurs to merchandise solar devices and home conservation equipment, and stimulate tech-

Coming:

Theodore Draper on Henry Kissinger.

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nological innovations adjusted to a host of individual and commercial outlets. On the face of it, this is a strategy congenial to conservative admirers of free markets and the liberal and radical children of the 1960s who retain affection for local control and community-based production.

However, it is also a strategy directly contrary to the interests of Exxon and its gigantic peers, the private utilities, and other participants in the happy alliance between big government and big business. The energy companies, notwithstanding the siren songs of their advertisements to the contrary, have excellent pecuniary reasons to preserve the OPEC cartel in good health, encourage wasteful energy practices, and emphasize new drilling in preference to conservation. In solar energy, their hedge position amounts to a bet on the big solar of satellites and towers, not the diffused technology favored by the authors, for big solar requires capital concentrations which exclude small and medium-sized operators. The Consolidated Edisons of the land distrust industrial cogeneration because it threatens their local monopolies. They discourage its spread by buying excess energy at knock-down prices and selling back-up power at premium rates. A large prize of big business/big government cooperation is Carter's synfuels corporation, an expensive wager on a technology certain to damage vast stretches of land and deplete scarce water supplies.

In blunt fact, Ross's and Williams's preference for experimental, diverse technologies and small-scale operation threatens corporate hegemony over the American economy. It strikes me as extremely implausible that our contemporary lords of the manor will meekly sell their birthright for moderate helpings of pottage. No desirable resolution of our energy problems is possible in the absence of firmer controls over big energy than the authors appear to favor. Bureaucracy-baiting has been so much in vogue recently that disheartened liberals seem to forget that the best friends of allegedly blundering regulators are the incompetent and heedless private operators whose neglect of the health and safety of their customers and employees created public support for EPA, OSHA, and the other agencies of social regulation during the Nixon-Ford era.

Closely inspected, the presiding geniuses of the market economy have per-

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formed no better in recent years than their bureaucratic antagonists. Ross and Williams take it for granted that the way to go is in the direction of reinvigorated private markets. My own hopes run to reassertion of the legitimacy of public action and improvement of its quality.

Let me reiterate, in closing, that this is an exceptionally useful book. In mercifully few pages its authors have acutely diagnosed the problem, pointed to wholesome remedies, and presented specific alterations in public policies complete enough to fuel a good argument. As the cliché goes, if you want to read just one book on energy, this is it.

Robert Lekachman

Robert Lekachman is Distinguished Professor of Economics at the Lehman College Campus of the City University of New York and author of the forthcoming *Beginner's Guide to Capitalism* (Pantheon).

Nolo Contendere

Lawyers on Trial
by Philip M. Stern

(Times Books; $12.50)

Philip Stern, after a successful career in government, politics, philanthropy, journalism, writing (e.g., *The Great Treasury Raid*) enrolled as a freshman in Georgetown Law School at the age of 49. It took him less than a year to see just how far the legal profession is slanted toward the haves and against the have-nots from the day of matriculation at law school right through to law office and courtroom. So, instead of finishing law school, Mr. Stern set out to write a book to reflect his "concern about the unequal distribution of lawyers' services and talents" and to "contribute to a lessening of injustice." And that's exactly what he has done.

It is not that most people—lawyers and non-lawyers alike—don't know about the low estate of our profession. Lawyers did not rate below garbage collectors in the Harris poll for nothing. What Phil Stern has done is put together a massive collection of practices and incidents that have brought lawyers to the bottom of the heap and some thoughtful proposals for getting out of the mess. In doing this, he has made mincemeat of Chief Justice Burger's statement to the American Law Institute a few years ago that lawyers "as a profession . . . place the public interest ahead of private gain" and the American Bar Association Code's assertion that "a basic tenent of the professional responsibility of lawyers is that every person in our society should have ready access to the . . . services of a lawyer of integrity and competence."

There is one statement the American Bar Association made back in 1972 that Mr. Stern is never going to let anyone forget, namely, that "the [ABA] has long been aware that the middle 70 percent of our population is not being reached or served adequately by the legal profession." Mr. Stern lists chilling examples of "for want of a lawyer" cases; one, literally a matter of life and death, will suffice. An elderly Medicaid patient in a nursing home was transferred to a less costly (for Medicaid) facility despite the fact that a medical phenomenon known as "transfer trauma" demonstrably increased by 500 to 900 percent the chances of a patient's death within four months of transfer. Under Medicaid law the woman had a right to a hearing on her transfer which almost always blocked transfer. Not knowing her rights and being lawyerless, she was moved to the new facility. Five months later she was dead.

Phil Stern is not one to run from a problem because it is tough or because a solution is politically unrealistic at the moment. He proposes that we "place legal help on a par with all the other parts of the justice system [the judges, the courts, the prosecutors, the police]. Make it equally available, free of charge, to all citizens alike regardless of wealth or station." Such a National Legal Service would befit a nation whose pledge of allegiance aspires to "justice for all," and one day that, too, will come. In the meantime, the question is whether the organized bar will at least demand the continuation and expansion of the Legal Services Corporation to help the poor. The current ABA president, William Reece Smith, said at a recent conference that "the organized bar generally and the American Bar Association in particular will stand to resist" any attacks on the Legal Services Corporation. *Lawyers on Trial* should encourage Mr. Smith to hie himself over to the White House after January 20 to help persuade the new president to expand a program Ronald Reagan never has liked.

Not only is the middle 70 percent of the population inadequately served by the legal profession, but Mr. Stern makes clear how all efforts to ameliorate this absence of legal help are given short shrift by the organized bar. By strict enforcement of laws prohibiting "the unauthorized practice of law," the bar throws its weight against useful innovations in the field of legal services. Thus, the Florida Bar Association brought criminal charges against a former legal secretary. Her crime—charging $50 to help divorce-seeking Floridians fill out the necessary forms to obtain a divorce in abbreviated courthouse proceedings. Self-help books and kits containing the necessary legal forms and instructions on the probating of wills and petitioning for bankruptcy equally evoke the wrath of the organized bar; its efforts to prevent the publication of Norman F. Dacey's book *How to Avoid Probate!* are notorious. The bar also has opposed legal clinics, which through advertising and large-scale operations are able to provide cheaper legal services. The organized bar seems to believe that the middle 70 percent not only does not, but should not, have help with legal problems.

I have space for only one more of Mr. Stern's major points, namely, that lawyers are their own policemen by virtue of the fact that complaints against lawyers by clients, other lawyers, and the public are, with few exceptions, considered and disposed of entirely by fellow lawyers who make up the disciplinary committees of state and local bar associations. The bar's slap on Richard Kleindienst's wrist for lying under oath is better known, but probably less significant, than the case of New York lawyer Hoyt Augustus Moore. Back in the 1930s a federal judge got word to Moore that he would rule as desired for a payment of $250,000 and Moore saw to it that the payment was made, an act

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he openly admitted to a committee of Congress after the statute of limitations had run out on his crime. The grievance committee of the New York City Bar Association did nothing, Moore practiced law till his death, and his name still adorns the "eminent" Wall Street firm of Cravath, Swaine and Moore.

An even more lugubrious example can be given from my own experience. In 1969 Jock Yablonski was the reform candidate for president of the United Mine Workers union. He "lost" the election because of a fraud committed by and on behalf of the incumbent UMW president Tony Boyle, who also arranged for Yablonski's murder. Subsequently a dispute arose over whether Boyle could continue to pay the salaries of two top UMW officials who were in jail under indictment for Yablonski's murder (two lie-detector controlled confessions by co-conspirators demonstrated their overwhelming guilt). A prestigious Washington law firm gave Boyle the written opinion he asked for validating salary payments to the jailed men, using the analogy of payments for sick leave and vacation time for corporate employees. Boyle conveyed this legal opinion to the indicted men through another co-conspirator the same day he received it, saying that it should please the two jailed officials. In effect, the Washington firm advised Boyle that it is legal to pay hush money to persons indicted for murder.

Six months after the Mine Workers' case ended and a new UMW president had been inaugurated, I ran into the lawyer who had signed the opinion and, trying to appear civil, I asked if he missed our daily battles. "Oh, no," he said, "I have been terribly busy working on the disciplinary committee of the bar." Phil Stern must certainly be right when he proposes that the legal profession be made "accountable to the general public and not just to itself . . . by subjecting the profession to control at all levels by a majority of laymen."

Lawyers on Trial does not recite all the good things lawyers do. Indeed, Stern expressly disavows any such intention at the outset:

> This book is about the dark side of the legal profession. It does not hold itself out to be a 'balanced' presentation (in the sense of giving the profession's virtues equal space with its shortcomings) any more than the pronouncements of the American Bar Association emphasize the bar's defects as much as its strengths.

What Mr. Stern has given us is exactly what his subtitle says: "A Book for People Who are Fed Up with Lawyers and for Lawyers Who are Troubled About Their Profession." I was troubled before. I am even more so now.

Joseph L. Rauh Jr.

Joseph L. Rauh Jr. is a civil rights, civil liberties, and labor lawyer in Washington, DC.

A Comedy of Instruction

Nuns and Soldiers
by Iris Murdoch

(Viking; $14.95)

Nothing is as it first appears in an Iris Murdoch novel. In *Nuns and Soldiers* she delves with characteristic vigor into her favorite theme, bringing to light the endless varieties of self-deception. Her 20th novel in 27 years, *Nuns and Soldiers* elaborates yet again Murdoch's version of the human comedy, in which romantic love is debased by possessiveness, and the quest for spiritual enlightenment is inevitably deflated by, as one of her more morose characters puts it, "the volatile faithlessness of the human mind."

Murdoch remains cheerfully impervious to trends in literary fashion and to the barbs of critics whom, in any case, she does not read: "One never learns anything one doesn't know from them." She continues to produce her own idiosyncratic brand of fiction, stubbornly refusing to part with worn narrative devices and a prose bloated with Christian motifs and metaphors of imprisonment, sacrifice, and illumination. She insists that her novels are comic and realistic as well as didactic. Notorious for the labyrinthine plots that wind their way to the protagonists' moments of clear vision, these novels are constructed upon crossed signals, eerie coincidences, letters of confession and accusation, and dizzying patterns of characters unhinged by unseemly passions for unlikely mates who, in turn, usually covet others. *Nuns and Soldiers* is no exception, but it departs from Murdoch's practice of featuring male protagonists and focuses upon two women, each of whom has reached a crisis about the meaning of love and suffering in her life.

Gertrude Openshaw's revered husband Guy dies from cancer soon after the novel opens; Anne Cavidge's personal God has vanished. Anne, once an intimate friend of Gertrude's, leaves the convent where she has spent her last 15 years, determined to find a new kind of purity outside the order. The women renew their bond, deciding they'll "be nuns together and do virtuous things." But only months after her husband's death Gertrude falls in love with another man. She abandons the virtuous life for the life of the senses, and Anne, to her horror, far from becoming a "secret anchoress," "truthful and lonely and harmless," falls right

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back into "the snares of the world." Gertrude is caught between languishing in her grief for the sage and civilized Guy, and nourishing her hedonistic attachment to Tim Reede—a mangy "soldier of fortune" and artist without talent who scratches out a living by scrounging for favors from his wealthy benefactor, Guy Openshaw. Anne must choose between her desire to attain a transcendent "good" and her corrupt carnal yearnings for another soldier. Early in the novel and again at the end she poses one of Murdoch's weighty questions: "Can love, in its last extremity, create its object?"

The nuns' male counterparts, meanwhile, Tim Reede and the Count—Peter Szczepanski (who is the object of

photo of Iris Murdoch by Tom Blau

Anne's love)—are engaged in similarly distressing ethical battles. Tim, like Gertrude, flits back and forth in his loyalties between an old and a new lover. A self-confessed failure, he is a case of arrested development who somehow manages to garner sympathy and fondness through his ineptitudes. The lugubrious Count (who really is not a count at all, but an orphaned Polish exile), thrives, like Anne, on the image of ideal love. He is a disciple of Guy's who for years has been nursing a secret adoration for Gertrude. But his patriotism for the country he has abandoned and his passion for the woman he cannot capture have mingled in his imagination for so long that he has trouble distinguishing between them. He sees finally that he has falsely "lived in an *imagined* love" just as he has in his "frustrated fantasy heroism."

Murdoch defines the aspiration for both sacred and profane love (her characters often confuse the two) as futile. There is no God who will provide an ultimate rationale for human suffering; and profane love, far from harboring the goodness and truth her characters yearn for, is badly marred by human frailties. In *Nuns and Soldiers* the decidedly agnostic Gertrude and Tim put their mutual disappointments to rest and settle for imperfect passion. Their erratic relationship is funny and compelling. The Count and Anne, on the other hand, are two "moral oddities" whose metaphysical questionings and self-flagellation are merely tiresome. Murdoch's saint figures invariably retain a maddeningly abstract quality, existing as emblems rather than as full-blooded characters. Even Murdoch can't seem to decide whether to take them seriously or to make them figures of fun.

Despite Murdoch's claims to the contrary, her pedagogy tends to outweigh her comic sensibility in her novels. *Nuns and Soldiers* is engaging when she moves away from her ponderous foreshadowings with luminous rock faces, dead dogs, and elliptical grey stones; when she doesn't force her protagonists to grapple with their mortality in life-threatening encounters with the natural world or life-sustaining encounters with the supernatural (as when Anne Cavidge meets Jesus Christ). When not pontificating, Murdoch is a shrewd observer of her characters' secret lives, meticulously detailing their eccentricities and banalities. It is her earnest muddlers, deluded egotists, and incorrigible family gossips, if not her aspirants to grace, who show us quite convincingly that "the self, the place where we live, is a place of illusion."

Dorothy Wickenden

Brief Review

In the Eye of the Typhoon by Ruth Earnshaw Lo and Katharine S. Kinderman

(Harcourt Brace Jovanovich; $12.95)

In the Eye of the Typhoon, Ruth Earnshaw Lo's chilling account of her family's experiences in Canton, China, during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution of 1966-69, reminds one of Mao Zedong's famous statement that a revolution is not, after all, a dinner party but an act of violence by which one political community overthrows another. Mrs. Lo's Chinese husband belonged from the outset to the "wrong" political community, although the couple seem only gradually to have awakened to the painful truth that they belonged to "a doomed species in the new order."

No matter what he did or thought, Dr. John Lo never could have become a member of the "right" political community, for he had, in his youth, studied abroad. Deeply suspicious of foreign-trained Chinese, Chairman Mao, who represented the nativist strain within the revolutionary camp, had from very early in his career maintained that such intellectuals were politically unreliable. Indeed, Mao had even suggested that, in addition to the orthodox Marxist criterion of economic position, "Chineseness" could be used as a determinant of class. Only those Chinese who were totally unsullied by the West could aspire to membership in the revolutionary vanguard; foreign-educated Chinese, by virtue of their foreign education, were hybrids whose professed commitment to the revolution would always be open to question. It was the persistence of this Maoist criterion of Chineseness as a second determinant of political community that accounts for the fact that many Western-trained Chinese were persecuted, incarcerated, or even killed during the fundamentalist movement of the late 1960s. Dr. John Lo, an American-educated psychologist who died when he was denied medical treatment by doctors who considered him a class enemy, was one these.

Mrs. Lo has succeeded admirably in interweaving the poignant story of her husband's extended ordeal (he had lived under a political cloud ever since being denounced as a rightist in 1958) with the frightening tale of a cruel civil war in which neighbor was pitted against neighbor, colleague against colleague, student against teacher, even child against parent. Laced with pathos yet narrated in a good-natured, wry manner, *In the Eye of the Typhoon* is about a society gone off the rails.

Joey Bonner

Joey Bonner is a lecturer on Chinese history at Harvard University.

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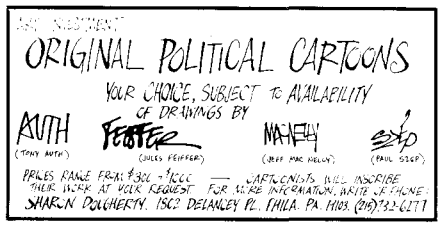
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Washington Diarist

Marriage, Libyan-Style

The Koran says you can have four wives and as many concubines as you wish (chapter 4, verse 3). We don't know how much of this lifetime quotient Colonel Muammar Qaddafi of Libya has used up. He seems to save his most passionate embraces for liaisons with other countries. Qaddafi runs one of those *l'état c'est moi* governments not uncommon in pre-modern Europe and very common in the third world today. But Qaddafi has given the notion of personalized rule a particularly primitive touch: he is always looking for wives for his country, wives who are pliant *à la mode Musulmane*. He also likes them big. Years ago, he aspired to take Egypt as his bride. Only a few months back it was Syria. And, as Tom Lehrer once sang about Alma Mahler Gropius Werfel, who knows how many came between? *Newsweek* says, without naming them, that there were at least three. The impending nuptials with Syria were announced simultaneously in Damascus and Tripoli. They didn't occur, but haven't been canceled. Last week hapless Chad became Qaddafi's latest intended. Not being Arab, it is probably tagged for the concubinage the Koran reserved for the lower orders. Desperately poor and desperately dependent for protection on the oil-thirsty French —and for both reasons, therefore, desperate indeed—Chad will have a harder time escaping Libya's clutch. These helter-skelter unions mock any coherent meaning of nationhood. Maybe Westerners value coherent meaning too highly. The Arabs happily contrive nations whenever a need or mere occasion arises. Always first, of course, there is the inclusive Arab nation stretching across the Maghreb to the borders of Asia Minor and into Iran. But then there are many Arab mininations, some real and steeped in history, others improvised and tailored to the politics of the moment. Thus a mélange of disparate and warring tribes is called Saudi Arabia, nomenclature to disguise the dominance of the Wahabi sect. To have a throne for the Hashemites, there must be Jordanians for them to reign over. The ideal of a unified Lebanese nation, despised over half a century, is suddenly an Arab cause, though primarily to quell the survival struggle of the Lebanese Christians. Another brazen contrivance is the Palestinian nation, inconceivable were there no war to be waged against the Jews.

Formerly dismissed as a box of sand, Libya is that no longer: oil has thrust the *duce* (with apologies to Mussolini) of barely two million inhabitants to the head of the class of tyrants with an international constituency. But Qaddafi surely does not head a nation. Libya too is a contrivance, an administrative one —not even of the Arabs themselves, but of the Italian colonial office, which also dredged up the name from antiquity. In the heyday of colonialism, what was to become Libya was the organizing center for the slave trade from equatorial Africa—from Chad in fact. Chad was the favored recruiting station of the Libyan slave traders. This trade to Turkey and Syria survived well after all others except for the trade destined for Arabia itself, which no one can say with absolute confidence has actually ceased yet. The fanatical Moslem warrior, Omar Mukhtar, first appears in history at the head of a Libyan column of soldiers fighting in Chad. (When Colonel Qaddafi gave Georgetown University some money for Arab studies, he named the chair after the hero he now emulates.) Dr. Waldheim, is the UN not interested in this violation of a member state's self-determination? And what about the people of Chad? Some are Arab and Moslem. Most are not, being black and Christian or animists. Who will speak up for them? Woe to anyone who does. The Libyans already have threatened terror on those who take up Chad's cause. The evidence of Qaddafi's murdered enemies around the world tells us that on this he can be trusted.

I confess: Frank Sinatra and I are friends—not intimate friends, mind you, or even very good friends, but friends. Sinatra's lawyer, Mickey Rudin, and I also are friends, good friends in fact. I don't feel apologetic about my friendships and don't see why William French Smith should feel apologetic about his, either. I don't know much about Sinatra's business involvements, but then I don't know much about the business involvements of many close friends, or even of intimate ones. I do read the papers, of course, but I don't believe a lot that I read in them. Nor am I about to trust some thug called Frattiano giving rehearsed, and some patently incorrect, answers to Mike Wallace on "60 Minutes." I don't set myself up as judge of why some folk like hanging around with folk I'd rather not hang around with. Sinatra is not a simple man. I can see a misplaced identification with the underdog in his associations with what the sociologists call "ethnic bandits." What he's never done—and no one charges that he has—is use his friendship with politicians to try to influence public policy. He worked for the Democrats when he liked Democrats; he worked for the Republicans when he liked the Republicans. And maybe my friend Bill Safire and even Maxine Cheshire, Sinatra's pursuers, have friends you and I would judge harshly. I've had some dealings over the years with both Sinatra and Rudin, complicated financial dealings over charities. I have not dealt with anyone more generous or more scrupulous, and less showy—that's my experience of them. It's the experience of others, too, maybe including the new attorney general. What some people hold against Sinatra is introducing Judith Campbell to John F. Kennedy, as if that introduction was what sullied JFK's virtue. The items the media have put forth against Sinatra count as evidence only if you count what Joe McCarthy put before us as evidence: some old photographs, leaked tidbits from FBI reports, and unsubstantiated gossip. There's no way people can defend themselves against this kind of stuff.

And how do you defend yourself against this charge made by Stanislaw Kania, the Polish Communist party's new chief? Aiming to stigmatize those who have tried to organize Polish farmers into unions, Kania revealed that "in some of these biographies we find an ancestry traceable to the landed gentry." In that sentence lurks a class version of the Nuremburg laws and the notion also of guilt by ascription. Karl Marx wrote disdainfully of "the idiocies of rural life." Right now in Poland it is rural folk who are, like the workers of Gdansk before them, exposing the idiocies of those who rule in Marx's name. Poland's greatest composer, Krzysztof Penderecki, brought his beautiful *Te Deum* to Washington last week, at once a religious and patriotic work. Kania may run the government in Warsaw for another month or another year, but it is Penderecki who speaks for the permanent Poland.

M. P.

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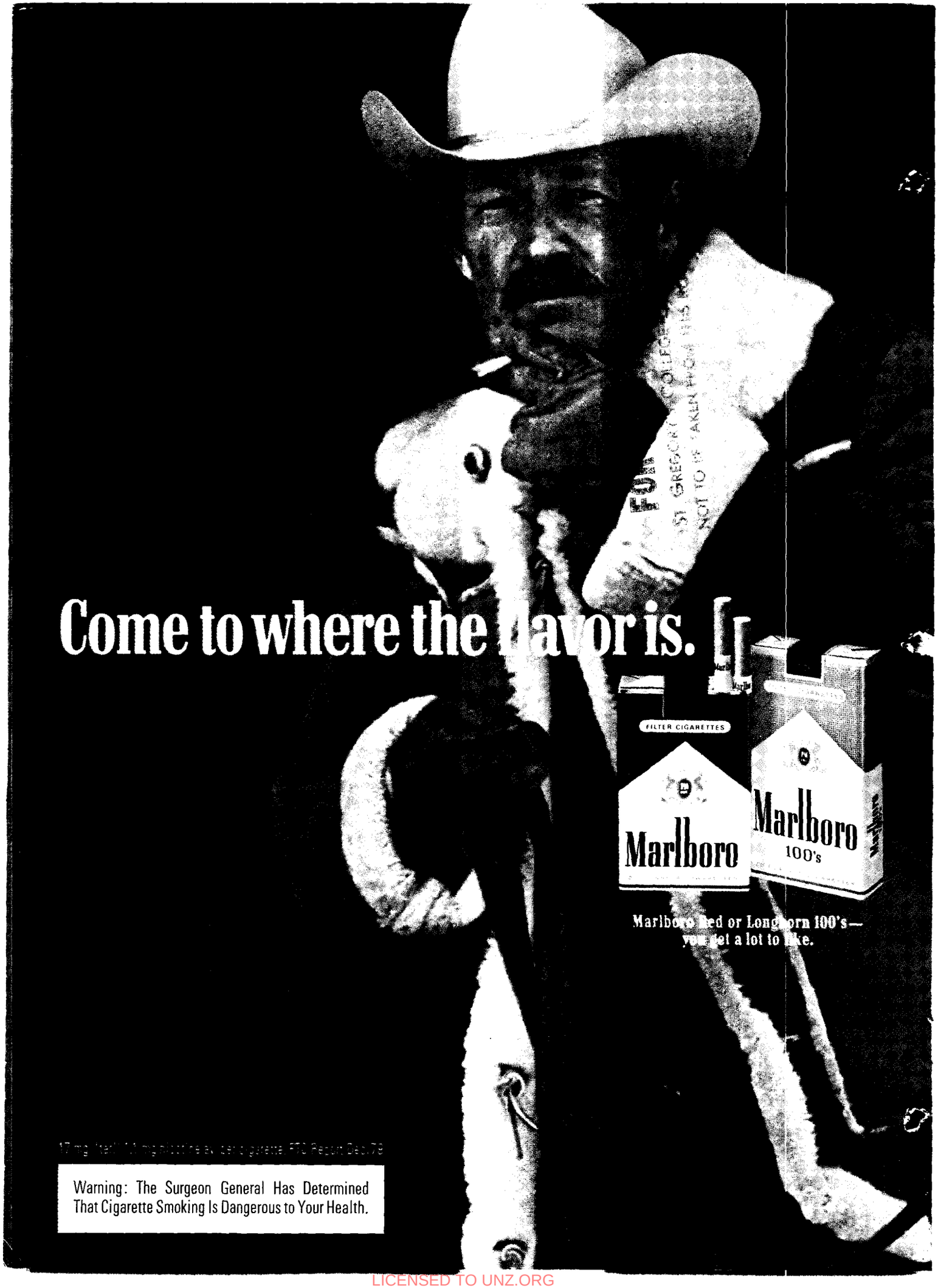
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